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ABSTRACT

The Maine Department of Education has encouraged all the state's school districts to develop a comprehensive assessment system to comply with legislative requirements and to create an integrated system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that provides all children with the best possible education. The resource guide uses the "Principles and Indicators for Student Assessment Systems" from the National Forum on Assessment as a basis. The first section explains these principles, considers the foundations of a "Learning Results" assessment system, and offers some lessons learned about assessment from Maine school districts. The second section describes the assessment work of six Maine school districts. The third section, "Self-Assessment Tools: Templates and Guides for Developing Local Assessment Systems," gives suggested procedures and templates for district self-evaluation. The fourth section is an annotated 32-item bibliography that suggests assessment resources. The "Principles and Indicators for Student Assessment Systems" document from the National Forum on Assessment, "Maine Standards for Assessment," and "The Features of a Learning Results System (Venn Diagram)" are appended. (SLD)

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GRAND IDEAS AND PRACTICAL WORK: THE MAINE LOCAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM RESOURCE GUIDE

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Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory At Brown University (LAB)

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USING THIS RESOURCE GUIDE

Contents

This guide contains a variety of resources. The Maine Department of Education encourages all districts to begin or continue the development of a comprehensive assessment system, not only to comply with the provisions of the legislative acts establishing a comprehensive assessment system, but also to create an integrated system of curriculum, instruction and assessment that truly provides all children with the best possible education the districts can deliver. A student graduating from a district is not judged by higher education institutions or employers on whether the district had sufficient resources or subscribed to a particular philosophy, but rather on what that student knows and is able to do. If a district is to successfully educate its students, it must engage in regular evaluation of all its work, including its assessment systems. The resource guide uses the *Principles and Indicators for Student Assessment Systems* (copy included) from the National Forum on Assessment as its underlying premise. These principles were chosen because they align with Maine's own work on assessment and have specific indicators as well as broad principles. The specific indicators allow districts to measure their assessment systems more precisely against the standards and also to track their progress in developing assessment systems. The work is complex, and the indicators give districts a means of noting progress even when there is still much to do.

There are four main sections to the guide. The first section, Developing Local Assessment Systems, explains the Principles of Assessment, considers the foundations of a Learning Results assessment system, and offers lessons learned about assessment from Maine school districts. This overview is intended to help districts consider where to start; it may be useful as whole-school professional development reading.

The second section, Case Studies: A Collection of Six District Approaches, describes the assessment work of six districts who presented at a recent local assessment system seminar. It is intended to give snapshots of the kinds of work a district might choose to do. It also gives contact information to follow up with other districts.

The third section, Self-Assessment Tools: Templates and Guides for Developing Local Assessment Systems, gives suggested procedures and templates for district self-evaluation. The fourth section is an annotated bibliography compiled by Maine Department of Education staff and various school districts containing suggested assessment resources.

Using This Guide

What if there is no district wide assessment system in place?

There are very few districts in the state with a comprehensive system in place. Even those with district wide assessments in core areas such as writing will want to build other components, e.g., Fine Arts, or to review classroom assessments, which are frequently not in complete alignment with other assessments or with current curriculum and instruction practices.

What are some districts doing?

The resource guide offers a number of avenues for exploring assessment issues. Case studies of the various districts involved in a recent local assessment system seminar offer examples of starting points for building an assessment system. For example, the case studies of a high school graduation dependent on exhibitions and of a district implementation of exhibition assessments demonstrate how one school in a district may lead the way for school wide or district wide discussions of assessment practices. Another case study highlights the use of performance assessments and writing portfolios in the lower grades. Vocational systems offer significant practical experience with performance assessments, and that case study may be useful for secondary discussions.

Are there templates available?

The self-evaluation tools include several templates. The Local Assessment System Inventory (p. 62) and the Local Assessment System Inventory Summary Sheet (p. 66) are for organizing all assessment instruments currently used by the district. The Assessment Principles and Indicators Narrative (p. 67) may be used to briefly place district work against principles. The Self-Assessment Continuum (p. 71) template is a lengthier version, suitable for completion as a team activity.

Where do we start?

Use the tools provided to determine what is already in place and where a constructive starting point might be. A practical way to encourage implementation may be establishing cross-school study groups to pursue greater dissemination of assessment practices throughout the district. The case study highlighting cross-grade work on developing assessments throughout a K - 12 system, for example, is a useful study group reading, particularly followed by use of the Self-Assessment Continuum (p. 71). Several case studies describe the initial steps districts took in order to begin assessment work and these may be useful as study group material or as guides to the development of action plans. Inviting teachers and administrators from these districts to discuss their work, either at a community forum or with small groups, may be a source of inspiration. Case studies include contact information for the districts.

How can we use these tools to build continuity within the district?

Two or three grade clusters within the district, perhaps high school teachers with middle school teachers, or middle and elementary teachers, might meet to develop articulated assessments. The self-assessment tools included with the resource guide, especially the Local Assessment System Inventory (p. 62) and the Local Assessment System Inventory Summary Sheet (p. 66), provide starting points for conversations among grade clusters about their current work and their future goals.

How do we evaluate the data?

Developing an assessment system is not about throwing the baby out with the bath water; it's about analyzing what exists and filling in where there are gaps. Two case studies describe the establishment of data feedback loops that involve most district personnel in the scoring of assessments and evaluation and use of data. Once districts have completed the self-assessment templates, they will be able to determine action steps to plan not only for the collection of data but also for data evaluation, curriculum development, professional development and instructional strategies linked to assessment system development.

What is the teacher's role in this work?

An assessment system is just that, a system. Its success or failure will in some way be connected to the investment of the people implementing it. One case study discusses a district's decision that "assessment is teacher's work." The district engaged in thoughtful planning to establish structures encouraging participation by all teachers. The concrete professional development activities described in the case studies and proceedings provide useful ways of engaging teachers in the process of developing an assessment system.

How do vocational and secondary schools link?

Vocational schools often work somewhat independently of sending districts, and the logistics of organizing representation from five or six sending districts can seem daunting. Linkage with sending schools is a goal that all vocational centers are generally eager to pursue; the tools in this kit provide a basis to establish a common dialogue among "academic" and "vocational" instructors around assessment issues.

What if central office has a good handle on the purpose and uses of district assessments, but individual schools, grade levels and departments are less clear?

Sharing information about large-scale assessments with the grade levels involved is typical practice for many districts; sharing information about large-scale assessments with everyone may be less so. Many districts do not routinely share much about grade-level or classroom assessments across grade levels. A necessary first step may be school wide discussions about classroom assessment. Completing the inventory tool as a district is one way to ensure participation in district assessments across grades.

What kinds of expertise from outside the district will we need?

Districts may find it helpful to use outside experts from time to time. Districts highlighted in the case studies sometimes employed psychometricians or other consultants to help establish particular assessment practices. In the initial stages of self-assessment, however, the most helpful expertise a district can have is a "critical friend". Districts may want to ask a neighboring superintendent, a community member, or other person familiar with the district to participate in the self-assessment process with them. The critical friend is not a "rater" of the district; rather, the friend serves as an

engaged observer, helping the district to determine areas of strengths and challenge, including dealing with validity and reliability (see page 21 of the attachment entitled, *Principles and Indicators for Student Assessment Systems*). The process outlined in the tools section of this guide suggests inviting a critical friend to complete the self-assessment inventories (p. 55), (generally with information supplied by the district) and then meet with a district team or committee to compare inventories and discuss any discrepancies. Multiple districts in the same region may want to organize a mini-seminar and invite several "critical friends", who can then review their impressions with each other, adding more viewpoints to the conversation.

INTRODUCTION

This guide, produced by the Maine Department of Education, is intended to provide support to Maine school districts as they launch their local assessment systems. In May, 1998, the Maine Department of Education, in collaboration with the Northeast Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University (LAB), invited six teams from Maine school districts to discuss their local assessment systems and to pilot the use of the self-assessment tools contained in this guide. Also invited to participate were interested observers as well as a panel of educators to serve as "critical friends". The design of Maine's comprehensive assessment system, which depends heavily on the development of local assessments, offers districts the opportunity to create a system that is tailored to a specific district's needs; however, districts also bear the responsibility of ensuring that the assessment system they develop treats all students fairly, is aligned with the Learning Results and is, in fact, a coherent system. What has historically been a patchwork of teacher-made assessments, standardized tests, and state tests must become a cohesive structure that works concurrently with the structures for curriculum and instruction. Regardless of the particular demographic or geographic circumstances of each district, all districts are faced with evaluating their current assessment system, aligning with curriculum and learning standards, and developing their particular district components of Maine's largely local assessment system. The initial Local Assessment System Seminar showcased some successful elements of local assessment systems, while recognizing that no one district has all the answers, and no one district has designed a system that incorporates all of the complexities of the task.

The Districts and Presentation Teams

The six presenting districts were the Lewiston Regional Technical Center, the Bangor School Department, Noble High School representing MSAD #60, Narragansett Elementary School representing the Gorham School District, MSAD #52, and MSAD #27. The districts and their approaches to the development of a local assessment system are profiled in the attached case studies. Teams were variously composed of central office personnel, building administrators, teachers, technical coordinators, and retired teachers.

"Critical Friends" Panel

The "critical friends" served as outside "eyes" for the district teams. Their role was to ask questions and push the district's thinking further rather than to pass judgment on the district's assessment systems. The "critical friends" represented a range of Maine expertise on teaching and learning. The panel included Ted Coladarci, College of Education at the University of Maine; Polly Ward, Director of Administrative and Personnel Services, Maine School Management; Susanne MacArthur, English Teacher, South Portland High School; Michael Cormier, Superintendent of MSAD #9, Farmington; Mona Baker, Regional Educational Services Team, Maine Department of Education; and Jill Rosenblum, Assessment Specialist, Maine Math and Science Alliance.

The Process

The seminar process encouraged districts to examine their emphases as well as the effectiveness of present assessment system components. Through a series of self-assessments, (templates for these are contained in the Tools section of this document) team discussions, and meetings with critical friends, district teams evaluated themselves on the current state of their assessment systems as measured against the standards set forth by the National Forum on Assessment (attachment, p. 14). The critical friends and teams described each aspect of a district's assessment system as *exploring*, *transitioning* or *transforming*, terms common to a number of restructuring processes, such as the Learning Results Implementation Grants, and used in Improving America's Schools Act. *Exploring* indicated an area of assessment in which the district was somewhat involved, but had not initiated a systemic process for that principle or indicator. *Transitioning* indicated an area of assessment in which the district was in the implementation phase, but which still lacked complete development. *Transforming* indicated those areas in which the district had a structure that was fully developed across all sectors of the district. The matrices used in the process are in the Tools section of this guide. In closing activities, teams anticipated what would be their next steps in building a comprehensive local assessment system. These are detailed in the Case Studies section.

Results and Acknowledgments

The Local Assessment System Seminar participants, whether school team members, "critical friends", or observers, shared generously of their time and expertise. Their honest reflection and engagement in the process not only provided district personnel with new information and strategies, but also provided the Maine Department of Education's Local Assessment System Seminar Design Team with invaluable information regarding the current and potential structures of comprehensive local assessment systems. The backbone of this resource guide is the experience of these practitioners in standards-based curriculum and assessment work.

DEVELOPING LOCAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS: NECESSARY FOUNDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Purpose of This Section

There are preconditions in schools and districts that make the development of assessment systems easier. There are also aspects of the development itself that help these conditions thrive. While all of these preconditions may not exist, as districts pursue the implementation of the Learning Results and concurrent assessment systems, these conditions may naturally develop, or they may need to be carefully nurtured. Using principles of assessment systems as discussion points may strengthen district planning. This section may be used by administrators, teachers, district teams or study groups to guide reflection on district structures and conditions and to determine the direction of the district's systemic work.

PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

This section discusses the principles and indicators of assessment systems that are included in the self-assessment tools and that underlie the development of the assessment system elements described throughout. Districts will want to review and discuss these principles as they undertake their work.

The national standards for student assessment systems included here, *Principles and Indicators for Student Assessment Systems*, (*Fig. 1, p.2*) were developed by the National Forum on Assessment, chaired by Monty Neill of Fair Test and Ruth Mitchell of The Education Trust. These principles and indicators were developed over a series of meetings and had considerable input from the field as well as from experts in assessment. The Maine Department of Education has chosen to use these principles as a guide in the development of local assessment systems for a number of reasons. First, the principles parallel those developed in Maine by the Maine Assessment System Design Team (*Fig. 2*, p. 3). Second, the seven principles set forth in the document offer districts a gauge for rating their current work and planning their future strategies. The corresponding indicators are useful in establishing concrete goals and accountability measures in the process of assessment system development. An Assessment Standards Crosswalk (p.79) connecting these

principles to the locally developed principles from Maine is included in the Tools section of this resource guide.

Figure 1

NATIONAL FORUM ON ASSESSMENT

PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS FOR STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

- The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning.
- Assessment for other purposes supports student learning.
- Assessment systems are fair to all students.
- Professional collaboration and development support assessment.
- The broad community participates in assessment development.
- Communication about assessment is regular and clear.
- Assessment systems are regularly reviewed and improved.

For the districts who participated in the pilot local assessment system seminar, a positive discovery was the degree to which elements of these principles were already embedded in district practice, despite the unique assets and challenges faced by each district in their school reform work. One district, for example, has developed a system that includes equal opportunity assessments for the English Language Learners in their district. Another district with large numbers of teachers and students has drawn on the expertise of the local university to assure reliability and validity.

Figure 2

MAINE STANDARDS FOR ASSESSMENT

- Align with Maine's Learning Results.
- Utilize Multiple Measures of Learning.
- Ensure Fair Assessment for All Students.
- Utilize Recognized, Relevant Technical Standards for Assessment.
- Provide Understandable Information to Educators, Parents, Students, Public and Media.
- Provide Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers, Administrators and Future Educators.
- Be Practical and Manageable.

FOUNDATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS: THE FEATURES OF A LEARNING RESULTS SYSTEM

Purpose of This Section

As districts reflect on their assessment work, they may also want to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in such areas as focus on student results; leadership; vision, mission and goals; policy and governance; human resources; technology and methods; and communication with the extended community. This section links assessment system development work with on-going district reform efforts and with the implementation of the Learning Results. These Features of a Learning Results System are presented at the end of this section (p. 8) in the form of a Venn Diagram.

FOCUS ON STUDENT RESULTS

All school work must have a central focus on student learning. Use of the Learning Results, district-specific standards, vocational competencies and other explicit criteria for achievement has the potential to greatly increase equity. It ensures that students, parents and teachers are clear about the work that needs to be accomplished, and that there is a basis for measurement of results. Reflective practitioners need to ask themselves often whether what they are doing will have a positive impact on student learning.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership is not simply assuming a designated mantle. Leadership for revising and recreating assessment systems can come from strikingly different segments of the school community, as is evident from the examples below:

- A school board intent on fostering higher expectations created the climate in which professional collaboration and reflection resulted in the creation of an assessment committee, and, ultimately, a district wide assessment system for core subject areas.

- High school faculty set a goal of establishing the use of exhibitions as an exit assessment for seniors and pursued that goal vigorously, producing a school wide exhibition system and instituting scheduling changes, procedures and protocols that substantially altered the normal course of business.
- The central office of one district responded to community expectations with a variety of strategies, including the establishment of new roles that released practitioners from the classroom for a year to serve as leaders in professional development work.
- Teachers throughout another system have sustained on-going curriculum and assessment work despite several central office changes.
- In a vocational school, faculty have been highly proactive in working with multiple sets of state and national standards to establish very high expectations around performance assessments.
- In a large urban system, central office support for summer academies encourages teachers and administrators to use assessment results in curriculum planning.

These examples are further illustrated through the case studies provided in this resource guide.

Vision, Mission and Goals

Creating a climate in which questions can be asked by students of teachers, teachers of themselves, administrators of teachers, and central office of everyone is a critical element of establishing a functional assessment system. Mission statements that everyone can remember, goals that are reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis, standards for good writing that are posted on every classroom wall—all of these are elements of a shared vision that permits schools and districts to operate as communities rather than as collections of independent agents. There are myriad ways to develop shared vision, but without any sense of common purpose, change is difficult to effect. Shared vision and leadership together often produce a climate in which adults and students alike believe that anything is possible. Excitement, risk-taking, rewards, and celebrations are often norms in school cultures that are fertile ground for high student achievement. In the six districts that took part in the recent Local Assessment System Seminar,

without exception, schools and districts questioned their work. They considered whether students were being challenged, whether faculty had sufficient knowledge and support to implement changes, whether scores were what they sought, and whether the community was satisfied with the results of their work.

Policy and Governance

District governance structures must give authority to those who are asked to produce results. Some districts use student results to influence teacher performance. Teachers and administrators use information from district wide data collection to make decisions about changes in instructional strategy. The changes are their responsibility; central office assumes only the responsibility to provide the data. This collaborative use of accountability measures is crucial to success. Everyone—teachers, administrators, and students—should know the standards to which they are being held and the benchmarks they are expected to attain. Armed with that knowledge, they can assume appropriate responsibility.

In the development of comprehensive assessment systems, districts will need to reconsider their allocation of funds. One of the case studies in this guide highlights a district that has implemented significant change over a period of years with little increase in local funding by carefully directing existing funds and judiciously seeking outside monies when necessary. Recognizing when to provide incentives to staff was also important to successful implementation. Although expectations change over time, when new tasks are assumed in addition to current responsibilities, incentives may be important.

Human Resources, Methods, and Technology

Teachers, who are on the front lines of all school restructuring efforts, need support in their work. Principals likewise may require greater information. Providing teachers with opportunities to work together in developing assessment activities; in aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment; in scoring assessments; and developing scoring instruments gives staff concrete experience with the work that is expected of them. Doing this work in a

collaborative environment may also foster success. Teachers presenting at a recent seminar frequently described their professional development work as directly tied to assessment development. Changes in classroom practice appear to be linked to these activities.

Using technology to integrate, collect, analyze and report data provides districts with a greater capacity to evaluate their work. When data collection is simplified, data becomes a more efficient tool for reflection, planning and action. According to several districts working on assessment system development, establishing data feedback loops create accountability measures and provide their staff and students with more reliable decision-making structures.

The Extended Community

Schools are a reflection of and a mirror for the extended community. They do the work of educating district students in partnership with parents and community members; they are also justifiably answerable to those same constituents. Districts highlighted in the case studies of this document stress the importance of communication. Sharing expectations with students and parents, sharing assessment results with staff, students and parents, and surveying teachers about their practices or students about their school experience are strategies that helped these districts push their work forward. Scoring assessments as a whole staff encourages communication about standards, and creates discussion about student work. Districts involved parents and community members in planning, exhibitions, and scoring. When changes in assessment are piloted, parents need to be informed. Communication of district work increases community confidence and displays professional confidence in the work.

Figure 3

The Features of a Learning Results System

Vision
Mission
Goals

Human Resources

Leadership

Student Learning

Policy & Governance

Technology & Methods

The Extended Community

STARTING POINTS FOR DEVELOPING ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

"You need grand ideas, but you must have practical work."—Cindy O'Shea

Purpose of This Section

The development of a comprehensive assessment system is not dependent on a particular entry point. However, the presence of various assessment practices do not necessarily constitute a coherent system. The materials provided in this guide will help districts to determine the degree to which they engage in a collection of assessment activities and the degree to which they have created a valid, reliable, and fair assessment system. In addition, districts will find information to help establish structures, processes and plans that will move an existing assessment further along the continuum of implementation or that will create a system from those unrelated activities.

Potential Starting Points for Developing and Refining Assessment Systems

- **District wide Portfolio Systems**
- **District wide Core Subject Performance Assessments**
- **School-based Exhibitions**
- **Professional Development**
- **Standards-based Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**
- **Selected norm referenced assessment**

Districts have a variety of reasons for beginning their work and a variety of ways to sustain the work. The common characteristic across districts at a recent seminar was that some segment of the system pushed into an avenue of exploration and then change. Since the vocational center, for example, has a commitment to current technology applications, creating a database for student-managed instruction fits with the mission of the center, which is piloting such a system. Using that information to push assessment practices is a natural outgrowth.

In another case, the faculty of a district had developed habits of collaboration. Teachers had been engaged in curriculum and assessment work for many years. When benchmark exhibitions were introduced, the notion that teachers would need supports to further the work was already embedded in the practice of the district.

For another district, the desire to raise the bar for all students at the high school level led faculty to revamp the processes by which they delivered instruction, and then, the means by which they evaluated student achievement. When one grade cluster institutes changes, others may follow suit.

These are examples of how districts might approach the development of an assessment system through one principle or structural feature of the district. On the other hand, a district may choose to implement strategies that promote successful assessment practices. For one district, the concentration of whole-staff professional development on assessment was the initial entry point. A largely veteran staff had the opportunity to hone their skills and broaden their knowledge base through a combination of on-going training and involvement in developing, piloting and evaluating district wide assessments based on local content. This initial experience built a strong and broad-based foundation for continuous development of an assessment system. In other districts that have chosen to engage in large-scale professional development on assessment, curriculum and instructional changes have been driven by assessment, rather than assessment changes rising from curriculum. Either means works, as long as the assessment work is done in a reflective and collaborative process that encourages thoughtful data-driven decision-making. The "right answer" for a district is what will increase student achievement for all students in that district and how the district will know that students are learning. The Local Assessment System Inventory (Tool 1, p. 62), a complete inventory, is a helpful tool for whole-district assessment.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM MAINE DISTRICTS

Purpose of This Section

Participants at the Local Assessment System Seminar had a wealth of combined experience in assessment system development. The lessons learned that follow were gleaned from their advice, and include some of the substantial tasks that must be undertaken to build an assessment system. Assessment system development is an on-going process. Designing, implementing and refining an assessment system will be lengthy and may sometimes require taking a step back to move forward. Districts will want to carefully examine their current systems and develop plans that will promote the use of system components that are working well while enhancing aspects of the assessment system that still need development. Just as curriculum and instruction practices have become more formalized and public in their nature, the complementary assessment systems will undergo similar change. The recent Local Assessment System Seminar yielded some lessons learned that may help districts in their efforts regardless of the status of their assessment system or the assessment components on which they are focusing. These lessons learned are illustrated in greater depth in the case studies found later in this resource guide.

When engaged in assessment system planning, consider:

- Aligning assessments with Learning Results.
- Designating formal teacher leadership roles.
- Including time for assessment in the daily schedule and yearly calender.
- Establishing data feedback loops.
- Teaching teachers scoring methodology.
- Developing portfolio systems for students and teachers.
- Making assessment an integral part of the curriculum, perhaps through the use of culminating projects and exhibits to build in-depth learning, student responsibility and community involvement.
- Recognizing the intertwined nature of assessment systems and realize that work on one aspect of the system will affect the whole.
- Developing survey and other reflection components to encourage discussion.
- Using research and lateral communication mechanisms.
- Using appropriate standardized testing.

- *Align the assessments with the Learning Results.* Alignment of curriculum and assessments is essential. The process of aligning the assessments to the standards should be separate from the alignment of curriculum and be an equally thoughtful process.

- *Designate teacher leaders.* In several districts, teachers were given particular roles and responsibilities as part of their regular assignment. This designation allows the teacher to concentrate on the task and develops a cadre of school-based leaders and experts. Whether teachers took on these responsibilities in lieu of a full teaching load, or were released for a portion of a school year, or took an out-of-classroom position for a year, they were able to provide crucial support to colleagues who were piloting or refining assessment practices.

- *Make sufficient time.* Building assessment into the school calendar may appear costly; however, scheduling days for scoring of district wide assessments is a highly effective use of resources if one considers the extensive professional development that it typically provides. Making assessment an equal leg of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment triangle may increase community support for these practices.

- *Establish data feedback loops.* Data that are inaccessible, uncollected, or unanalyzed are useless to the improvement process. Central Office in particular plays a role in ensuring that data, whether from standardized tests, portfolios, locally developed assessments, surveys, or other sources, are available and widely disseminated. It is equally important that teachers, students, parents and community members understand the purposes and uses of such data. Data-driven decision-making must be a central facet of any assessment system.

- *Teach teachers scoring methodologies.* Teachers who work together scoring district wide (or state) assessments appear to develop a deeper understanding of assessment. Districts participating in the seminar described a noticeable upswing in the use of scoring rubrics at the classroom level when teachers were included in these processes. In some districts, the fubrics are formal tools that are required, while in others, they are used because teachers understand their value and choose to incorporate them into classroom instruction.

- *Develop portfolio systems for students and teachers.* The nature of portfolio systems varied from district to district, but in all districts they serve the purpose of encouraging documentation of student growth and achievement. The challenge in developing assessment systems that provide a complete picture of student performance lies in being able to document the day-to-day assessment work that permeates teaching and learning. Portfolios are a useful tool for monitoring ongoing student progress, providing relevant data on which to base instructional decisions, and promoting professional development and discussion. Where teachers kept portfolios, they became an avenue of lateral communication.

- *Make assessment an integral part of instruction, through the use of culminating projects or exhibitions that allow for higher order reasoning skills.* Assessments that are an integral part

of the teaching and learning process offer greater depth in learning for students and increased understanding of student capabilities for teachers. Students are able to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. The nature of such projects encourages research and reflective practice not only from students but also from teachers.

- *Recognize the intertwined nature of assessments.* Working on one part of the assessment system will affect the system as a whole. Several of the presenting districts commented that their report cards had not begun to catch up to their current practices, and anticipated that changes would have to be considered. At least one district noted that their parent advisory committee did not want to alter the current report cards although they were aware that they did not capture student work and that further discussions with the community about expectations of information from the school system would need to be held.

- *Ask questions.* Districts sought support from their staffs and communities in a number of ways. Surveying parents and other community members about their opinions and concerns, surveying staff about their current practices and needs, and surveying students about their satisfaction with services delivered were all facets of the process of developing one or more of the district assessment systems described in the case studies. Moreover, continuing to seek comments after implementation is as important as seeking guidance beforehand: communication loops are as important as data loops.

- *Appropriate use of standardized testing.* Most districts use some standardized testing. It provides teachers, students, parents, and the community with information that is useful in setting goals for students, faculty and the community.

No one of the above suggestions is the perfect answer for district assessment processes. All of them, however, have merit in establishing and implementing district assessment systems.

CASE STUDIES: A COLLECTION OF SIX DISTRICT APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT OF ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

Purpose of this Section

The districts highlighted in these case studies have all worked on a particular aspect or aspects of assessment system development. They have for the most part not made radical departures from previous work; rather, the assessment practices have evolved and changed over a period of years. For most of the districts, serious consideration of changes in practice began in the early nineties. Some districts began with the development of standards; others searched for a framework that allowed for discussion of instructional practices. Assessment changes typically grew out of these other avenues of work. Although the case studies highlight certain practices, it is important to remember that all of these districts employ a variety of assessment strategies. Districts with benchmark exhibitions continue to administer the California Achievement Test (CAT); districts that test all students for basic writing skills also organize classroom work around portfolios. For the most part, the evolution of assessment systems has been to garner a more complete picture of student achievement.

All districts have some evidence of some assessment principles in place; no district has all or even one principle fully implemented. Conversely, the principles highlighted in the case studies reflect some aspect of the district's work, but do not reflect all that is being done in the district's assessment system. The implementation of a standards-based comprehensive assessment system, like the implementation of standards-based curriculum and instruction, is an on-going process.

All information for case studies was furnished by the districts. A contact person for each district is listed at the conclusion of the case study to obtain information regarding an individual district's assessment practices.

ASSESSMENT IS A WAY OF LIFE

MSAD #52

Key Assessment Principles and Indicators:

Assessment systems, including classroom and large-scale assessment, are organized around the primary purpose of improving student learning.

- *Teachers use current principles and technical concepts of assessment, particularly validity and reliability, in developing and analyzing their classroom assessments.*

Knowledgeable and fair educators are essential to high quality assessment systems and practices.

- *Teachers regularly participate in setting performance standards, selecting examples of work of different quality, and scoring or re-scoring portfolios or performance assessments at the school, district, or state level.*

Background

MSAD #52 is a largely rural school district located in the center of the state. Large employers include Blue Rock Industries, Maine Poly, and Decoster Egg Farms, which brings a number of Spanish-speaking children to district schools. The twenty-three hundred students are scattered across four small, town-based elementary schools, a middle school and a high school serving all three towns. In addition, a small alternative school serves students from seventh through twelfth grade. Although the communities retain their rural flavor, a fair number of adults commute to work in the neighboring larger cities of Lewiston, Auburn, and Augusta.

In 1989, the MSAD #52 School Board decided to investigate reform initiatives. A retreat led to the establishment of Effective Schools practices as well as the creation of three committees to examine practices in the district. The Assessment Committee came to believe that changes in district wide assessment practices would help students and teachers develop higher expectations. The decision was made to develop assessments that would more accurately evaluate higher level thinking skills and to provide multiple venues in which students could demonstrate their achievement. Recognizing the need to test for higher level skills and to match testing with the curriculum, the district worked with the developer of several state standards-based systems. These local assessments are part of a carefully selected comprehensive range of assessment strategies which use not only published tests and the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA), but also surveys of staff, student and parent satisfaction. The comprehensive assessment program includes writing to a prompt and open-ended assessments in reading and math that are developed, scored and revised locally. Performance platforms are being piloted at the high school level and are in use at one of the district's elementary schools. Based on this year's pilot, they will likely involve all students in the next two years. Data are analyzed not only for individual student results but also for gender and socioeconomic bias. School level action plans, developed with the whole building staff, respond to the data. The process does not belong to any one component of the district, but is infused into all district work.

The local assessment component of MSAD #52's system has seven significant implementation aspects:

- district assessment days;
- table leaders and teacher participation;
- portfolios;
- scoring rubrics;
- alternative assessments;
- inclusive practice; and
- piloting.

District Assessment Days

Assessment days are set aside in the district calendar to score locally developed assessments. All teachers and administrators are responsible for participation in this activity. Grade level and subject area are not a consideration in the assignment of scorers; therefore, district personnel develop a greater understanding of the curriculum across the district. Meals are provided and the days are scheduled and funded with an eye to their importance for the overall work of the district.

The scheduling of days that are devoted to scoring the assessments and providing funds to ensure that the process is as efficient and thorough as possible has made the establishment of local assessments a more rapid and effective process. The assessment process is integral to instruction, rather than an add-on.

Table Leaders

Teachers volunteer for this assignment and it is shared among many staff. Table leaders are trained in scoring protocols prior to the assessment days and then provide training and assistance to their table teams.

Scoring Rubrics

The assessments are scored with rubrics. After years of such work, teachers have developed greater common standards. The initial experiences of scoring assessments tied to the National Commission on the Teaching of Mathematics (NCTM) standards led math teachers to alter their curriculum and instructional methods to more closely resemble the standards. On-going discussions about assessment have influenced classroom practices throughout the district.

Alternative Assessments

MSAD #52 teachers are encouraged to think about assessment in an integrated way. The District established a formal application and support process through which teachers create alternative assessments. Time and money are provided for the exploration of alternative assessment practices. For many teachers, the availability of an alternative assessment development plan has meant the chance to develop an oral component that closely reflects the day-to-day classroom practice.

Inclusive Practices

The MSAD #52 school district has developed accommodations for students who may have difficulty with assessments. The district has a variable number of Spanish-speaking students, many of whom are the children of migrant employees, and may move in and out of the district. The district assessment policy regarding these students is simple and straight-forward: they are assessed in their most fluent language. If students are sufficiently proficient in English, they are asked to demonstrate their skills in English. If students' assessments would be skewed by a lack of English skills, there are other options. Where testing reliability and validity are not compromised, the assessments are translated. If translation is inappropriate, students are assessed in Spanish, and their work scored by district personnel fluent in Spanish.

The district provides significant classroom assistance through the use of Title VII funds, which allows the district to hire tutors and facilitators. English Language Learners are given ample opportunities to achieve and are held to the same high expectations. Furthermore, teachers are assisted in providing extra supports for English Language Learners.

Piloting

All district wide assessments are piloted and evaluated before they are in general use. Test items are examined pre-and post-testing for reliability, validity and bias. In order to compare results across years, only a percentage of new items are added in any given year. In 1997 - 1998, MSAD #52 worked with the Maine Math and Science Alliance to develop math assessments for second grade. Math Assessment kits will be piloted in all second grades. These kits will provide teachers with everything needed to embed the alternative assessments in their classroom instruction.

Underlying District Supports

Professional Development

The assessment and alignment work has pushed the district toward increasingly student-centered practices, according to Assistant Superintendent Linda Parkin. The involvement of all teachers and administrators in scoring has helped infuse these practices in classrooms; throughout the district, teachers have altered, adjusted and recreated their teaching methods as a result of data received from student work, their own participation in scoring the local assessments and increased professional development supported and encouraged by the district. The scoring work has been an opportunity for professional development and has also encouraged greater participation in other professional development opportunities. As Ms. Parkin notes, when the professional development calendar first included alternative assessments, there were few takers. Now, it's a popular choice for MSAD #52 teachers. All teachers and administrators who are new to the district must take a course taught by district staff that includes assessment methods.

Resources

The district has been able to significantly alter its assessment practices with very little drain on the district budget and has on occasion been able to lower the cost of assessment. Funds from Title VI have been used, as well as other grant monies, to institute the changes. District support has been primarily in the form of professional development funds and the inclusion of scoring days in the calendar.

For MSAD #52, the assessment program has become a part of the fabric of the work. It is not an add-on; rather, instruction design responds not only to curriculum but also to assessment, and teacher-driven professional development is a strong component of this emerging system. The assessment program is not an isolated segment of the district's work. MSAD #52 surveys teachers, parents, support staff, and students, including very young students, about their satisfaction with the school. On the following page is a sample of questions asked of Kindergarten, first and second grade students.

MSAD #52

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS - PRIMARY SURVEY

School_____ Grade Level (Circle) K 1 2

Gender (Circle) F M

1. Do you like school? Yes No

2. Do I help you feel good about school? Yes No

3. Do I tell you when you do a good job? Yes No

4. Do most boys and girls do what the teacher tells them? Yes No

5. Do I want you to do a good job in school? Yes No

6. Do you like to learn new things in school? Yes No

7. Do I let your parents know how you're doing in school? Yes No

Highlights of MSAD #52 Assessment Practices

- District writing and math assessments include all students, teachers and administrators in the work of assessment.
- Time in the school year for thoughtful assessment has made system change more rapid.
- Global participation in the assessment process has expanded classroom assessment practices.
- District support for teachers helps increase the success of alternative assessments.

Contact: Linda Parkin, Assistant Superintendent, MSAD#52, (207) 225-3795

ESTABLISHING A DATA FEEDBACK LOOP
BANGOR SCHOOL DISTRICT

Key Assessment Principles and Indicators:

Educators, schools, districts, and states clearly and regularly discuss assessment system practices and student and program progress with students, families, and the community.

- *School and teacher reports about student achievement focus on what students know and are able to do, what they need to learn to do, and what will be done to facilitate improvement.*

Knowledgeable and fair educators are essential to high quality assessment systems and practices.

- *Schools, districts, and states provide adequate opportunities for administrators to engage in professional development that supports sound teacher and school assessment practices.*

Background

Bangor, the most populous community in eastern and central Maine, is one of the state's largest districts, serving 4500 students in 10 schools, and has significant community resources, but also has a wide range of students. The School Department is committed to using data to improve teaching and learning and to inform the community about the level of student achievement. Formal structures have been established to ensure that data are used most effectively. The school department distributes regular information to the community regarding all assessment results. The data from norm-referenced large-scale assessments is available to the public in summarized form in a readable brochure that highlights programs available for students as well as offering basic, current, aggregate assessment data. Reports on each school are also made available. At the school and classroom level, administrators and teachers receive a variety of reports on student

performance, some of which are described below. Central office provides support to teachers through the evaluation of data and professional development strategies to help teachers who are responsible for student goals and teachers in turn provide support to parents in helping them assist their children in meeting the targeted goals. Bangor's writing program provides an illustration of the process.

Elements of Bangor's writing program include:

- multiple assessments;
- teacher leaders who provide professional development and support;
- district wide performance assessment scoring;
- classroom use of data;
- extensive reporting of data to teachers, students and parents; and
- formal review structures.

The Writing Program: Multiple Assessments

The Bangor School Department began its performance-based assessment programs in the early 90's. The system has developed a number of district wide instruments. The Maine Educational Assessment for 1996-1997 indicates that the work has been fruitful; Bangor has significantly higher scores on the writing portion of the exam than the state average. At grade four, the differential is 20 points; at grades eight and eleven, 60 points.

There are multiple assessments that are used to drive instruction, including locally designed writing and reading skills tests, district wide writing rubrics, and classroom portfolio work. Supporting this content-specific work are a number of department practices, including the extensive data collection and analysis by central office, administrators, and teachers. Major components of the system include training teachers in scoring and developing various data and evaluation points.

Teacher Leaders, Professional Development and Performance Assessment Scoring

As in many districts with performance assessments, Bangor involves large numbers of staff in the scoring process. District teacher leaders and central office staff conduct sessions in which teachers read student work and, first individually, and then in small groups, evaluate that work against a scoring guide. The purpose of such dual scoring/professional development sessions is to build a greater degree of inter-rater reliability. Such sessions sometimes use sample student works; other sessions ask teachers to bring their own students' work for consideration. Teachers are continually encouraged to make use of the rubrics to ensure accuracy of scoring.

In a typical recent session, teachers teams scoring second grade work included first, second and third grade teachers. Such cross-grade level work builds not only inter-rater reliability, but also increases articulation of writing skills across the grades. Teachers initially spent an hour looking at representative work as a whole group before beginning their individual scoring work and then reaching consensus on student scores. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Robert Ervin notes that one of the learnings from the work has been "to keep student work as the core investigation of staff development" for performance assessment. Teachers who engage regularly in this kind of activity, he notes, "can't get out of it without a certain competency."

District-wide Scoring

Student district-wide writing assessments are scored by multiple readers in large scoring sessions held either at the end of one school year or during August. For each grade level, the School Department scores about 350 to 400 pieces of student work each year; more than 5000 individual student works are scored this way each year. All district classroom and special education teachers generally participate; specialists may participate, or may have other assignments, depending on district needs. The five-point writing scale on which works are scored is in wide use in the district and used by students in their daily work. While other assessments given at the building level are not necessarily required to have multiple scorers, the practice is encouraged, and assessments that determine a child's placement on an Individual Student Plan (ISP) must have multiple raters.

Classroom Use of Data Analysis

The information acquired in these scoring sessions becomes part of the data feedback loop. According to Assistant Superintendent Ervin, data are generally organized around individual student performance. Large-scale assessment data and performance assessment data are aggregated for reporting purposes for classrooms, schools and district wide. School wide data are shared publicly, but are also used on a regular and on-going basis to inform classroom instruction. At the building level, teachers and administrators receive the collected assessment data in various forms, such as frequency charts, that allow teachers to evaluate whole-class competencies. Principals and teachers use this information to determine changes in instructional strategies. The analysis of classroom data in this way is intended to ensure that changes being made are linked to on-going student achievement rather than anecdotal evidence and that timely responses can be made. An early reading intervention program, developed locally, uses district wide testing in a similar fashion to ensure that all children read on grade level as soon as possible. (A math management program also exists that enables staff to monitor achievement and make immediate instructional responses.)

Reporting Data to Teachers, Students and Parents

In addition to the information available to teachers about individual students from performance assessments, teachers regularly assess basic writing skills using a district-wide assessment instrument that is returned to the student and included in the student's folder, so that students may receive individual attention to particular grammar skills or assume that responsibility themselves. The combination of writing goals and grammar assessments are also provided to parents during conferences and in other appropriate forums, which allows them to help their children with both their assessed needs in basic skills and their particular interests. Parents receive explanatory reports from the district office that describe student writing and reading achievements from the central office also.

Formal Data Review Structures

Bangor has a number of formal structures complementing district wide scoring sessions that ensure data are reviewed at the school and classroom level. Among these structures are weekly administrative meetings which are largely devoted to considerations of student progress. The

summer academies for both administrators and teachers, at which data from the previous school year, having been analyzed on a number of levels, are used to adjust and alter curriculum, instruction and assessment practices, allow collaborative development of instructional strategies. Teachers who have done well at improving student achievement are formally interviewed by the district to determine successful strategies and those strategies are communicated to other staff.

Bangor has a strong data feedback loop in the system. Planning based on data from classroom assessments, district wide assessments and large-scale norm-referenced assessments is supported through formal structures and widespread dissemination of data. Multiple assessment results ensure that accurate information is provided for individual students, classroom teachers, schools and for the district as a whole, and formal data structures ensure that the information leads to planning and planning leads to implementation.

Bangor's Data Feedback Loop

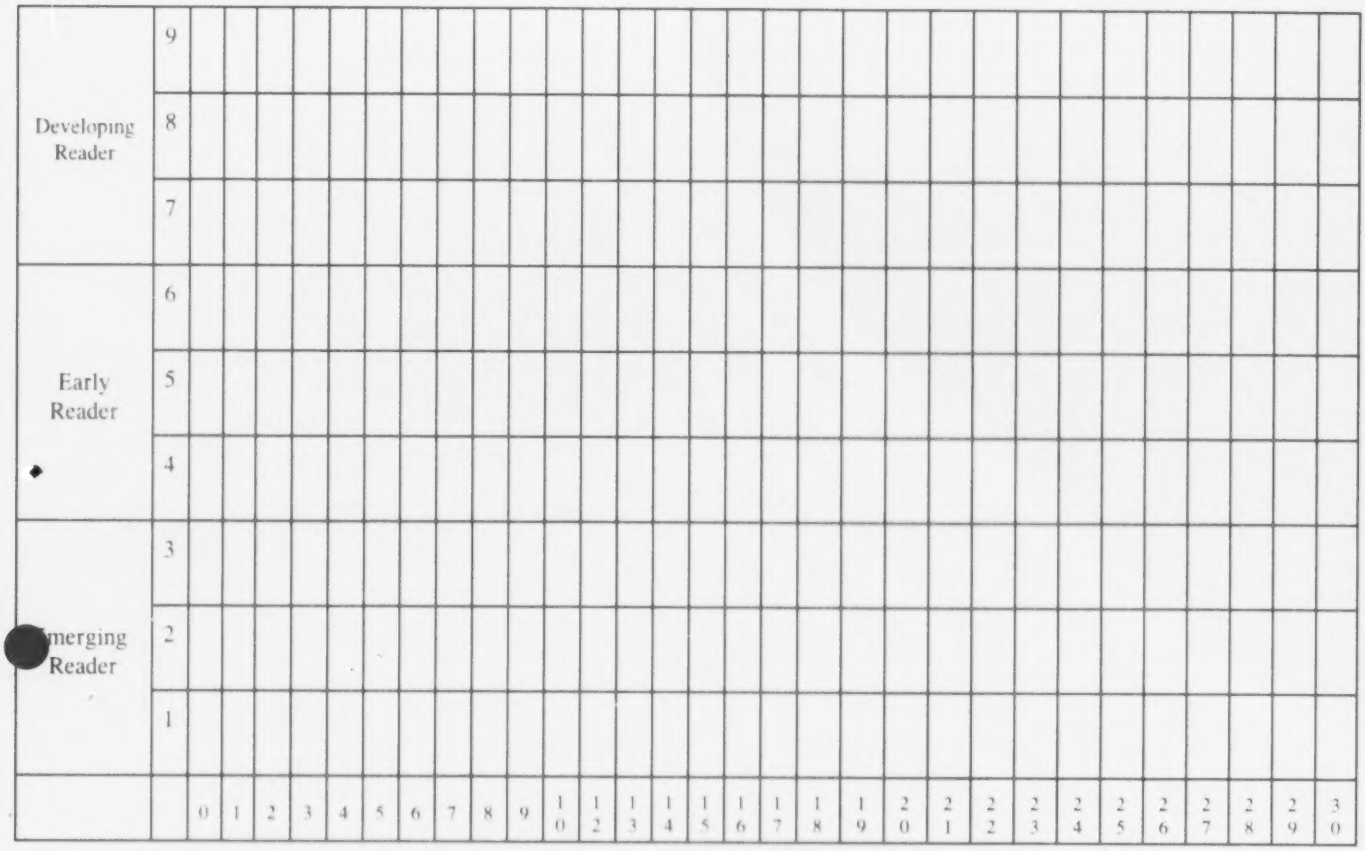
- Formal structures are in place to help teachers and administrators use data most effectively.
- Data feedback loops are used to inform instruction.
- Student improvement is targeted through extensive use of data.
- Teachers provide support to parents in helping to meet targeted goals.
- Central office staff provide support to teachers in meeting student goals.

Contact: Dr. Robert Ervin, Assistant Superintendent, Bangor School Department, (207) 945-4400

Bangor School Department
Literacy Assessment Graph

Student's Name: _____ School: _____
Teacher : _____ Year: _____

DEVELOPMENTAL READING STEP



INSTRUCTIONAL READING LEVEL

☐ The TRANSITIONAL READING ASSESSMENT is designed to assess advanced first grade readers. In addition to reading, children are asked to interpret and write answers to a variety of questions.

KEY
▲ September
■ January
● May

The target goal for the end of first grade is Instructional Level 16 and Developmental Step 7

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BENCHMARK EXHIBITIONS: SHOWING WHAT WE CAN DO
GORHAM–NARRAGANSETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Key Assessment Principles and Indicators:

Assessment systems, including classroom and large-scale assessment, are organized around the primary purpose of improving student learning.

- *Student and teacher self-reflection and evaluation are part of the assessment system.*

Knowledgeable and fair educators are essential to high quality assessment systems and practices.

- *Educators actively participate in professional development for improving their capabilities as assessors.*

Background

Gorham has been engaged in significant professional development and collaboration since 1982 and has a strong foundation on which to build. The fruits of this work are evident, as teacher leaders throughout the system maintain responsibility for the ongoing work of the district. Over a decade ago, the Gorham School District, under the leadership of former superintendent Connie Goldman, began to explore changes in organizational structures, curriculum, instruction and assessment. That work continued with successive superintendents and is now deeply embedded in the fabric of the district. Key elements of Gorham's overall educational program are:

- standards-based curriculum;
- reflective practice;
- exhibitions and the design process;
- teacher collaboration;
- project-based learning; and
- inclusion of all students.

Standards-based Learning and Reflective Practice

Gorham has district outcomes, developed prior to the Maine Learning Results. There are five areas of concentration in curriculum, instruction and assessment that are considered "givens" in the district: portfolios, projects, conferences, compulsories, and benchmark exhibitions. Reflective practice, for teachers and students, pervades the work. "We are good reflectors in Gorham" is both fact and creed. Portfolios, projects, conferences, and compulsories create a logical progression toward the culminating assessment, benchmark exhibitions. Exhibitions give students a chance to demonstrate the depth of their learning. They also give teachers a chance to expand the breadth of their teaching.

Exhibitions and the Design Process

The exhibition process has evolved in a number of ways during the years it has been in place. Design templates have been edited to make connections to the Learning Results more evident to both students and teachers. These templates help teachers and students ensure that student goals are clear and linked to Gorham Outcomes, that essential questions are addressed, that multiple tools and resources are included, that multiple intelligences are incorporated into the presentation, that knowledge and skills are developed, and that both on-going and final assessments are planned. These templates are not "prescriptions", but rather blueprints for creating successful exhibitions.

To prepare for such assessments, students are instructed on three different levels. "Daily" work or "assignments" are generally initiated and assessed by the teacher. At the next level, teachers and students work toward "big ideas". Criteria for assessment are developed by students and teachers. Exemplars and rubrics are elements of this facet of instruction. Students maintain portfolios and work at improvement. The highest level of assessment is the exhibition, three key elements of which are the explicit criteria against which work is judged, the presence of an external audience and the ability of students to defend their work based on standards they comprehend. Parents and community members may participate on exhibition panels; students might also invite a friend from another school or class. Panelists comment on the exhibition, and students do a self-evaluation. Presentations may be video-taped.

The "givens" for Benchmark Exhibitions are the following:

- *All students in grades 3, 6, 8, and high school must do a Benchmark Exhibition incorporating the essential ingredients of project design within classroom practice.*
- *All Benchmark Exhibitions will include three Compulsory Performances: writing, oral presentation and one other.*
- *Benchmark Exhibitions will be performed in April and May for K - 8.*
- *Benchmark Exhibitions will be held within the context of each classroom and grade level.*

Professional Collaboration

Strong teacher leadership has gone into establishing standards and improving assessment practices and the process of adding exhibitions to the assessment program has been well-served by that leadership. A "hotline" has been used to allow teachers to seek help in design and planning units. In addition, support groups have been established at all levels that provide teachers with collegial support, guidance and sharing opportunities. The activities of a support group vary according to group professional development needs. For example, teacher Polly Brann explains, the third-grade support group might spend time weighing what is appropriate to ask of students at that level, or they might simply exchange successful strategies. The support groups ensure that responsibility for preparing students for exhibitions is shared among the staff and that teachers for whom the process is new are able to prepare students appropriately.

Inclusive Practices

All Narragansett Elementary students participate in the exhibitions. A necessary condition for success for all of the students is "lots of practice in the early grades." Teachers work collaboratively and creatively to challenge students and create safe environments in which all children can succeed. Often, teachers will help students design the exhibitions around personal interests that are more likely to inspire the child's self-confidence. For example, a child with autism given the opportunity to teach others her calligraphy skills was able to explain enthusiastically that she could teach anybody. The individualized nature of the exhibition design process and the student involvement in the process promotes student engagement.

Since Gorham has had long involvement with restructuring, district staff tend to view improvement as a continuum, not an event, and understand that there is always a next step. The design process is embedded in classroom instruction, making assessment increasingly more student-centered. Faculty from Gorham note that portfolios, which have been an aspect of district assessment for some time, are now becoming more useful as they are linked to culminating exhibitions, a clear example of the continuing cycle of refinement necessary to establish an assessment system. Faculty are also cognizant of the need to align Gorham's curriculum with the Learning Results, to begin the process of bench marking exhibitions, and to more strongly link assessments with the standards. A sample design template follows on the next page.

Project Design Template

UNDERSTANDINGS/
GOALS

THEME

KNOWLEDGE
AND SKILLS

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

FINAL ACTIVITY/EXHIBITIONS
CULMINATING PRODUCT

TOOLS AND
RESOURCES

ASSESSMENT /
ONGOING AND FINAL

GORHAM OUTCOMES

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Gorham School District's Reflective Practices

- Reflective practice is a central tenet of all district assessment.
- Developing teacher leaders has increased overall collaboration.
- Teacher support structures ensure more effective implementation of new practices.
- Exhibitions are a central assessment practice and occur informally at all grade levels.
- Formal exhibitions are held at grades 3, 6, 8 and 9-12.

Contact: Amanda Dunphy, teacher, Narragansett Elementary School, Gorham School District, (207) 839-5017

LEADING THE WAY: HIGH SCHOOL EXHIBITIONS

MSAD #60: NOBLE HIGH SCHOOL

Key Assessment Principles and Indicators:

Assessment systems, including classroom and large-scale assessment, are organized around the primary purpose of improving student learning.

- *Most assessments allow students to demonstrate understanding by thoughtfully applying knowledge and constructing responses.*

Assessment systems report on and certify student learning and provide information for school improvement and accountability by using practices that support important learning.

- *The evaluation of an accumulation of work and assessments done by students over time is a major component of accountability.*

Background

MSAD #60 includes three southern Maine communities on the New Hampshire border. It serves 3250 students in eight buildings. A number of large industrial employers are located in the communities.

The district has introduced a number of assessment tools in recent years. Particularly noteworthy is the use of portfolios throughout grades K - 12. The introduction of this work at the elementary and middle levels is a likely result of the work at the high school. Middle school and high school students are required to provide reflections on their work, which teachers then use to reflect on

their own practice. The district encourages students to use their portfolios in interviews and applications. The development of the portfolio system has involved cross-district work.

Organizational Structures

Noble High School has a number of organizational structures that have supported the changes in the assessment components of its instruction, curriculum and assessment programs. The central tenets of the work at the high school include:

- student-centered learning;
- high standards for all;
- Senior Celebrations (exhibitions);
- portfolios for students and teachers; and
- reflective practice.

High Standards and Equal Opportunity

The high school is heterogeneously grouped, and all students take four years of English, math and science. All students at Noble High School are expected to graduate with the abilities and competencies outlined in the high school's guiding principles. The school administration and faculty expect to provide adequate support and access to ensure that happens. In addition, all students take Junior and Senior Seminar, the purpose of which is to give students models and skills for delving deeply into a topic and developing their own in-depth knowledge base. They learn the design process thoroughly. They learn to be reflective practitioners.

Vocational students at Noble High School take their vocational classes at Sanford Regional Technical Center or at the significantly closer Somersworth Vocational Center in New Hampshire. Cooperating with school districts across state lines is not typical practice, but it is typical of Noble's attention to student needs. Assistant Principal Arlene Jackson notes that "the bottom line for us is what's best for kids."

Senior Celebration: Exhibitions and Design Process

The Senior Celebration is not a one-time event, nor is it an add-on to the curriculum. It is the culmination of at least two years of work on the part of students and faculty and the entire structure of a student's education at Noble is based on the expectation that he or she will be prepared to design and produce an acceptable Senior Celebration. The process offers students an opportunity to demonstrate a depth of knowledge about a particular subject. They also demonstrate skills in presentation, design and writing. There is a real-world quality about the work: students must be able to explicate their work, even if the original medium is physical, visual or abstract. Just as mathematicians in the real world need to articulate theory, and lawyers need to explain the law, students at Noble are expected to be able to answer questions and discuss their pursuits. In reflecting on the exhibition process, one art student mentioned overcoming the fear of speaking about art. To document that achievement is invaluable to that student.

Additionally, students ". . .must show evidence of learning beyond what the student already knew about the topic," and "must show evidence of research and long-term study." The exhibitions have proposals, a research component that includes documentation, a time line, and a requirement for a mentor, who provides additional expertise. The panel includes their advisor, their mentor, and perhaps an outside expert in their field.

Portfolios for Students and Teachers

In addition to the actual exhibition, which includes a presentation in front of a panel of teachers, community members, students and others, seniors must deliver a portfolio that includes, among other requirements, evidence of citizenship and service. This portfolio supporting a student's exhibition must have extensive supplemental materials, some of which are the school's Vision Statement and Learning Results, a one-page proposal for their exhibit that required prior approval, a resume, a letter of introduction or autobiography, recommendation letters, samples of work with reflections, scored rubrics after completion of exhibition, and reflections on volunteer work.

Since Noble teachers document their curriculum and assessment work with portfolios for each content unit, they are able to model reflective practice for their students while creating

documentation of their own work. Such documentation permits teachers to engage in continuous refinement and also encourages lateral communication among teachers about their work. The assessment process at Noble is continuous for students and faculty alike.

Reflective Practice

Exhibitions have been a graduation requirement for three years, and faculty continue to reflect on and improve the process. Faculty expend considerable effort in ensuring consistency of expectations for Senior Celebrations and portfolios. Structures for formal reflection include faculty meetings after the Senior Celebrations at which student reflections are reviewed. These reflections are a part of the data used to ensure quality in this segment of the assessment system. When juniors leave in June, they take with them a document about Senior Celebration that includes any changes based on the year's exhibitions and student and faculty reflections.

The High School staff who presented at the May 1998 Local Assessment System Seminar felt strongly that community involvement in the assessment process, both in the design stage and the exhibition phase, could be stronger and identified that as a goal. In Noble's continuous improvement model, the exhibition process is expected to evolve in conjunction with on-going curriculum and instruction work as well as within the context of the assessment development and refinement process. On the following page is a copy of the Senior Celebration Scoring Guide.

SENIOR CELEBRATION SCORING GUIDE
Class of 1998

This Senior Celebration Panel will decide today whether the Exhibition portion of the Celebration has been performed at an acceptable level. The Exhibition must include all of the following elements:

☐ Evidence of effective communication. This may be demonstrated by:
- Communicating well through a variety of media and/or technology
- Using clear, confident speech
- Maintaining eye contact
- Keeping good posture
- Dressing appropriately

☐ Evidence of learning beyond what the student may already have known about the subject.
- The student's prior knowledge is clearly presented
- The student's learning is clearly presented

☐ Evidence of research and long term study. This may be demonstrated by:
- A thorough, complete treatment of the subject
- Effective answering of questions from the panel
- Written research must follow the guidelines stated in Writing Research Papers

☐ Evidence of practice:
- The presentation was well organized
- The listener was able to understand the subject presented
- Transitions were smooth
- The exhibition captured the interest of the audience

☐ Appropriate length:
- 15-40 minutes

All panel members must agree that the above elements are present in the exhibition. If one or more of the elements are not present, the student will have the opportunity to repeat this exhibition.

To be considered at the Distinguished level presenters must clearly demonstrate the elements and all indicators at a superior level.

Feedback

WARM (Please take a believing, supportive, appreciative perspective. What is *clearly* there?)

_____

_____

_____

COOL (Please take a doubting, constructively critical, perspective. What is *unclear* or *missing*?)

_____

_____

_____

☐ Repeat ☐ Acceptable ☐ Distinguished

Signed _____

Noble High School's Conditions for Exit Exhibitions

- All students have equal access to challenging curriculum.
- Every teacher maintains a portfolio for every content unit.
- Every student prepares a culminating exhibition, the Senior Celebration.
- The school curriculum prepares every student to design and produce a culminating exhibition.

Arlene Jackson, Assistant Principal, Noble High School, MSAD#60, (207) 698-1320

APPLIED LEARNING SUPPORTS PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

LEWISTON REGIONAL TECHNICAL CENTER

Key Assessment Principles and Indicators:

Assessment systems, including classroom and large-scale assessment, are organized around the primary purpose of improving student learning.

- *Assessment practices incorporate the variety of different student learning styles.*

Assessment systems, including policies, practices, instruments, and uses, are fair to all students.

- *The group which designs or validates an assessment reflects, has experience with, and understands the particular needs and backgrounds of the student population, including race, culture, gender, socio-economic, language, age and disability status.*

Background

The Lewiston Regional Technical Center (LRTC) serves students from five area high schools in twenty-six different programs. Between 500 - 700 students attend the school. The regional vocational centers in Maine have long experience with performance assessment. The centers must juggle multiple sets of standards, serve multiple constituencies, and provide quality preparation for multiple industries. In addition, the content of the curriculum and the means of instruction is frequently technology-driven and in a constant state of change.

Major components of the LRTC's performance-driven assessment practices include:

- advisory committees with external membership;
- piloting of computer-managed instruction;
- standards alignment;
- authentic instruction;
- multiple assessors; and
- student results surveys.

Advisory Committees

Technical Centers design their curriculum and assessment structures through a collaborative process. Advisory committees, comprised of vocational faculty, community members, employers, academic instructors, students and parents design, review and evaluate curriculum. The curriculum is required to be aligned to the Maine Career Advantage Standards, the relevant national content standards, and the Maine Learning Results. (The alignment of these standards with each other is still in progress.) Committees meet formally four to six times a year. Students on the panel may be currently enrolled in the particular program, or they may be recent graduates. Changes recommended by the committees may be driven by a need for instruction with new technology, student input regarding quality, or other relevant data. These committees are natural structures for even more inclusive discussions of standards and assessments, and the LRTC anticipates making greater use of the structures as the alignments progress.

Advisory committee members may be formally or informally involved. The best advisory councils follow a process that allows them to meet and look at student work, assess portfolios, discuss best practices, and celebrate project design curriculum work at the end of the year. Each advisory committee has membership drawn from the larger community. They may be involved in hiring vocational students and their input is crucial in determining assessment practices and content of assessments. Since outside members of advisory committees often work closely with students in the work place, they bring both a current knowledge of the field and an understanding of student abilities and needs. Current and former students sitting on these committees bring recent experiences as learners to the table.

Piloting of Computer-Managed Instruction

In its Pathfinder Lab, the LRTC is piloting the use of a Computer-Managed Instruction model that allows students to determine the pace and delivery mode of their instruction and assessments. Students choose the delivery of instruction to suit their needs and learning styles. They then trigger the computer-based assessments when they feel ready to take them. A failed assessment causes instructor and student to return to earlier steps. This system is currently used to assist students who need remediation in academic subjects. Eventually, it will be used to manage all instruction at the technical centers. Since it has significant capacity to store and manage data, instructors will be freed from that work to pursue more direct work with students.

Standards Alignment

All state technical centers are working collaboratively to align the Maine Career Advantage Standards with the Maine Learning Results. Vocational students will then be judged on both task standards and the academic skills involved in completing that task. Vocational educators will be working with academic instructors on this alignment work. Assessments will be aligned with both, so vocational students might be asked not only to demonstrate knowledge of algebra, but also to present that learning in the manner in which it is applied in their particular workplace. This intertwining of knowledge and skill has been a central tenet of vocational education, and the standards alignment and subsequent assessment alignment will make that relationship more explicit and more easily documented.

Authentic Instruction and Assessment Practices

Students at the LRTC have the opportunity to learn their craft via multiple routes, including Internet instruction, hands-on curriculum, and real-life practices such as running a bank or working in a hospital setting. Students maintain portfolios of their best work. This work increasingly takes place in the community itself. The banking program, for example, is housed in a working bank. Students receive an initial semester of site-based instruction and then apprentice in numerous positions within the organizations. Assessment in such a situation is as authentic as possible and students have the opportunity for formal and informal evaluations from practitioners in their chosen fields.

Multiple Assessors

In the LRTC, all those involved in instructing students participate in the assessment process. For example, a student who has worked with several mentors in the banking program will be rated against the standards set for that program by all those mentors as well as the supervising instructors.

Student Results Surveys

Technical Center faculty are also required to seek feedback from graduates in their program. Individual faculty survey individual students to maximize the return rates. Feedback is sought about such concerns as appropriateness of student preparation and placement. This information is shared with the Technical Center School Board and with administrators from all sending districts. It is also used in curriculum and instruction planning. A sample section of a typical survey follow.

Excerpt from Follow-Up Telephone Survey for School-To-Work Transition

12. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-Poor, 5-Excellent), how would you rate your LRTC program:

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

13. Why did you give this rating - Justification: _____

_____

_____

14. Do you plan to enter post-secondary training and/or employment in a related area to your LRTC program in the future? _____

_____

Highlights of Lewiston Regional Technical Center's Assessment Practices

- Vocational Schools have long experience in authentic assessments and performance assessments for vocational subjects and applied learning.
- The use of technology in instruction and assessment is crucial to the vocational education process.
- Vocational Educators must align assessments to multiple sets of standards.
- Community involvement is a central tenet of vocational education.

Contact: Dr. Don Cannan, Director, Lewiston Regional Technical Center, (207) 795-4144

PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT

MSAD #27

Key Assessment Principles and Indicators:

Knowledgeable and fair educators are essential to high quality assessment systems and practices.

- *Educators work together to determine the professional development needed for improving their capabilities as assessors.*

Assessment systems, including classroom and large-scale assessment, are organized around the primary purpose of improving student learning.

- *Assessment practices are compatible with current knowledge about how learning takes place and allow for variety in how students learn.*

Background

MSAD #27 is located in rural Aroostook County, the largest county east of the Mississippi River. The seven Canadian border communities that comprise the district have a combined population of fewer than eight thousand, and are economically dependent on farming and lumbering. The University of Maine at Fort Kent is a major community player.

For ten years, the district has been pursuing curriculum and instruction reforms. A broad-based group of citizens were brought together to determine the district's priorities. The community wanted clear standards and the means to understand how students were doing. These are tight-knit communities, and the work of the school is clearly viewed as the community's. The district mission statement reads, in part, "All citizens in MSAD #27 will work together to provide a learning environment where learning...is celebrated by students, staff, parents and the

community." The larger community's expectations and support are the foundation for the district's educational program, including the assessment component.

The district developed local standards which are very similar to the Maine Learning Results. They also made a decision to invest in professional development that would allow teachers to implement an assessment system, work that is an outgrowth of these earlier standards. Based on the philosophy that teachers are the key in the assessment process and that what happens on a daily basis in the classroom is the essential element in student achievement, the district decided that teachers should both be given the opportunity to participate and be required to participate. Significant features of this work include:

- alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment;
- the designation of teacher leaders;
- extensive professional development;
- district-wide creation and sharing of assessment tasks; and
- reflection.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Alignment

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment have been undergoing an alignment process. The work is led by five curriculum leaders and the Special Education Director. For the most part, curriculum leaders are practitioners; however, one is a retired teacher and one had a one-year release from the classroom to work on a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Grant. Two teachers have part-time release to serve as curriculum resource teachers. This support for professional development work has been the key to the district's success. Creative use of funding and resources (employing a retired teacher as a curriculum leader, for example) has been important in fulfilling the goals of the mission.

Teacher Leadership

It is not simply that the work has teacher leaders: the decision was made that, as Superintendent Sandra Bernstein said, "This work was teachers' work." She noted that MSAD #27, like many systems, "sometimes had a small group doing cutting-edge work and a much larger group of

people who were content with current practice." The challenge to the district and the faculty, then, according to Mrs. Bernstein, was "how to allow and to require the teachers to do the work."

Professional Development

All staff participated in two significant professional development opportunities. They were trained locally in *Dimensions of Learning* and they participated in the development of the District Learning Results, which closely parallel the Maine Learning Results. Following these opportunities, the teacher leaders in the district began to work with staff to achieve a greater consistency in assessment practices across the schools. One teacher leadership strategy has been to conduct ongoing discussions that encourage teachers to assess their own work for connections to the standards.

Performance Tasks

Another leadership strategy has been the use of concrete professional development activities resulting in district wide piloting of prompts in math and writing as well as the use of district wide integrated units. In one such unit, Curriculum Leaders wrote a series of performance-based learning and assessment tasks. They were based on a text with local meaning by Ethel Pochocki, a Maine author whose work had relevance for the community. Each faculty member used them in developing interdisciplinary units at their own grade level. The units were then shared at a professional development fair. Such tailor-made materials appeal to both students and teachers. The showcasing of work across the district has been an important step so that all teachers and community members could see firsthand the results of the work. Such sharing structures will allow teachers from geographically distant schools in the same district to more readily collaborate. The district has refined its approach to the development of such materials and now starts with the standard rather than fitting the standards to the unit.

Piloting

The district has been piloting a number of alternative and expanded assessment practices. A variety of assessment tasks have been piloted throughout the district. Some students in grades 2 and 8 have participated in a pre-pilot for the Maine Assessment Portfolios. In the ninth grade, district staff piloted seminars on learning results and assessment practices. Students were asked to share with their parents their understanding about learning results, assessment, and personal narratives. Materials were provided to involve both students and parents in this process.

Reflection

MSAD #27 met or somewhat exceeded all the accreditation standards on assessment from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges recent accreditation of the district. Significantly, eighty-five percent of district teachers believed that the purpose of grades and reporting systems was to provide information to students for self-evaluation. The accreditation report also documents teacher concern with and interest in developing an assessment process that is truly reflective of the district's philosophy and goals. For example, a reflective practice sheet on aligning curriculum with Learning Results asks teachers to consider whether "leftover" curriculum topics (those that are not tied to Learning Results), "are..essential and worthy of classroom instructional time?" This sheet notes sympathetically that "pet projects which don't address learning results don't have to be eliminated but they can not have the priority..." of teacher and student time and attention. To create an atmosphere in which such frank discussion of the need for congruence between individual teacher work and district work can take place is a necessary step in the development of reflective practices. MSAD #27 teachers are continuing to review, refine, and re-evaluate their work to ensure that they are indeed practicing what they profess. Teacher collaboration with each other and the broader community has been crucial in the initial stages of development of this comprehensive system. On the following page is a selection of key learnings.

MSAD #27
Key Learnings on our Journey

Planning Backwards

- Teachers seem to prefer analytic rubrics or assessment lists for the process of self-evaluation, peer critiquing and teacher feedback but they seem to prefer holistic rubrics for a more time-efficient assessment of products.
- It is important to keep it simple, start small and stay focused.
- It is crucial that the assessment moves towards the goal. Ex: Rubric must fit the desired learning results.
- Things don't have to be perfect. Allow yourself to make mistakes and to learn.
- Teachers do not like release time when they need a substitute. They appreciate a token stipend to work after school.

Interdisciplinary Units

- Teachers like to work in grade level teams to develop interdisciplinary units, especially on district in-service day when there are no students. They enjoy the collaboration and the collegiality.
- Make sure that the word "unit" is clearly defined for your purpose. A unit can be a curriculum, instruction, and assessment unit. It can be interdisciplinary with two, three or more content area lessons which are connected by a concept. Etc.
- Teachers need to practice self-assessment, feedback practices and reflective practices themselves before they can implement in their classrooms.
- Having the teacher generate their own criteria for a task is better than providing them with an "expert" list. For example, it is beneficial for a group to generate criteria for what makes a good performance task, a good rubric, a good interdisciplinary unit, etc.
- Teachers design better units when they have models.

Professional Development

- Teachers respond positively to their peers who provide active and engaging professional development.
- Teachers like to have a voice in determining professional development needs.

MSAD #27 Professional Development Practices

- The community needs specific standards about what students know and are able to do and wants accountability.
- Assessment development is teachers' work: it is necessary to both allow and require them to participate.
- The use of teacher teams to develop standards-based units and scoring has informed practice.
- Showcasing the work of teachers and students increases its impact.
- Support for practitioners is the basis of systemic change.

Contact: Dr. Sandra Bernstein, Superintendent, MSAD #27, (207) 834-3189

Next Steps

All the districts participating in the Local Assessment Seminar had done considerable work in thinking about the development of assessment system pieces. Their work at the seminar, both as teams and with the "outside lens" of the critical friends, encouraged them to think about where energy and time might best be spent next. The following is a summary of where district teams saw their work going. Assessment system work involves all the elements that comprise a district and the particular next steps cited here may illustrate the work of the district as a whole or that of a single sector. They are included to illustrate the on-going nature of the work:

- educate students about the assessment process (MSAD #52);
- refine the assessment reporting system (MSAD #52);
- explore integration of vocational curriculum, instruction and assessment with academic work of sending schools (Lewiston Regional Technical Center);
- continue implementation of Computer-Managed Instruction to provide as complete a student-centered instructional package as possible (Lewiston Regional Technical Center);
- continue alignment of assessments with multiple standards, including the Learning Results (Lewiston Regional Technical Center);
- continue to provide leadership in the district by extending and expanding conversations with middle and elementary schools (MSAD #60/Noble High School);
- expand faculty, student and community participation in the development of assessments (MSAD #60/Noble High School);
- align assessments and curriculum (Gorham School District/Narragansett Elementary school);
- continue development of performance assessments in various subjects and areas (Bangor School Department);
- continue on-going alignment of standards, curriculum and assessment (Bangor School Department); and
- replicate Local Assessment System seminar for others in district (MSAD #27)
- use assessment literacy standards with district leaders (MSAD #27).

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS: TEMPLATES AND GUIDES FOR DEVELOPING LOCAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

Local Assessment System Evaluation Procedures

Here are suggested steps to organize a Local Assessment System Evaluation. This process should provide the district with information on its current status and assessment planning needs.

- Identify a team to organize, review and report the results.
- Have an initial team meeting to review the responsibilities of the team, determine the most appropriate personnel to complete the inventories, decide what other information must be gathered, and determine the most appropriate critical friend or friends to assist in the evaluation.
- Invite "critical friend(s)" to participate.
- Assign responsibilities for distributing and collecting the inventories.
- Assign building-level responsibility for explaining inventories to staff and fielding staff questions.
- Reconvene one team to assess the responses and organize a whole staff review. Share information with "critical friend(s)."
- Share collected information with whole staff at review. Invite "critical friend(s)" to ask questions.
- As whole staff or in small groups, review and self-assess, using the *Principles and Indicators for Student Assessment Systems*.
- Ask "critical friend(s)" to share their analysis. Discuss discrepancies and arrive at compromise evaluations of district strengths and challenges.

ASSESSING THE ASSESSMENTS: A PROCESS FOR SELF-REFLECTION

For districts or regions wanting to replicate a self-assessment process to help districts establish, maintain and improve assessment systems that are aligned to the Learning Results and the principles of assessment, the following outline should offer some guidelines. These are suggestions and regions may have their own enhancements, but the fundamental elements of designing the process are included.

- **Prepare standard materials that address all assessment system facets and share them with participants and critical friends in advance.**

Included in the resource guide are assessment inventories, the principles of assessment ratings sheets, and a sample procedure. A wide cross-section of district personnel should be involved in using these tools, even if a small representative team is selected to attend the actual review. Self-reflection is a vital part of the process and the more broadly-based that reflection is, the more productive a district may find it. Districts may want to highlight the work of a particular grade cluster, but will want to describe all the elements of the district's current assessment work.

Furthermore, completing the documents in advance of the process will allow districts to increase lateral communication around this important task.

- **Develop and discuss common definitions for stages of development at the outset of the assessment seminar.**

With shared definitions presented at the initial stages, discussions between critical friends and district teams will be more fruitful. A common understanding of the definitions will also allow teams to help each other self-assess more accurately.

- **Establish clear phases of the process: districts and critical friends should prepare in advance, offer presentations based on standard guidelines, confer with each other and critical friends at regular intervals, and the final report out of each district should reflect the best thinking of all concerned.**

Each phase of the process assists district personnel in developing a deeper understanding of assessment systems, their own district's systemic strengths and weaknesses, the necessary next steps for their district, and the communications that must occur within their particular educational community to accomplish those steps. Truncating or abandoning any phase may leave gaps in the team's understanding or the critical friend's abilities to offer appropriate advice.

- **Establish next steps, contact lists, and the other supports to help district teams implement their work at the site.**

The complexity of the process requires great attention and will undoubtedly be frustrating and even depressing at points. Even experts require support during the implementation phase. Sharing resources, tips, and successes can ease the burden. An important component of any assessment system seminar will be the establishment of communications structures that encourage informal and formal communication among districts at all levels.

- Prepare standard materials that address all assessment system facets and share them with participants and critical friends in advance.

- Develop and discuss common definitions for stages of development at the outset of the assessment seminar.

- Establish clear phases of the process: districts and critical friends should prepare in advance, offer presentations based on standard guidelines, confer with each other and critical friends at regular intervals, and the final report out of each district should reflect the best thinking of all concerned.

- Establish next steps, contact lists, and the other supports to help district teams implement their work at the site.

DIRECTIONS FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Tool 1. The Local Assessment System Inventory

The Local Assessment Inventory asks a district to lay out the entire picture of assessment. Using this tool well requires some time investment and may require the participation of several district staff. Divided by subject area, the inventory asks the team to organize assessment information in three layers:

1. *large-scale* (whatever state or national tests the district uses or participates in);
2. *district* (those measures that are developed locally and used district wide, such as writing portfolios); and
3. *school* (those building or classroom assessments that are appropriate to list).

This table is also divided by grade level, and asks for an indication of level of report. The basic information that this template organizes allows district personnel to examine the elements of a comprehensive system that are already in place and to identify gaps or overlaps.

Tool 1A. The Local Assessment System Inventory Summary Sheet

This template is a summary sheet that helps districts tie the Local Assessment System to the Learning Results Content Areas by grade level. It also represents graphically the overall emphasis of assessments by grade level.

Tool 2. The Assessment Principles and Indicators Narrative

This tool asks districts to write brief descriptions of the current assessment efforts as they link to the seven principles of the Assessment Principles and Indicators Narrative. For some principles, the indicators that are most significant to Maine are highlighted. These brief descriptions are

useful background information for staff, parents and community members who may be working on self-assessment efforts or participating in particular aspects of assessment planning.

Tool 3. Self-Assessment Continuum

This set of templates asks districts to evaluate their local assessment system in greater depth. Using the standard terms of Exploring, Transitioning and Transforming that are the basic self-assessment language of federally-funded reform efforts such as IASA and Goals 2000, district participants rate the current status of the district in relation to each of the seven principles and provide evidence of that status.

These templates encourage districts to look more closely at the systemic nature of the assessment program. For example, there may be ample evidence of professional collaboration and support helping assessment practices in some buildings, but little at others. In that case, the district team or committee addressing this principle would need to consider whether the district is still "exploring" that principle or is in fact "transitioning" since there is a plan in place to expand such practices. Districts should not be discouraged if, in their self-assessment procedures, they find few areas they are comfortable labeling "transforming". The notion of a comprehensive assessment system is relatively new and the integration of sound assessment practices throughout their work takes time.

Tool 3A. Self-Assessment Summary

Once discussions based on the Self-Assessment Continuum have occurred, this template may be used to summarize the strengths and accomplishments and the needs and next steps. The development of action plans for expanding "transitioning" or "exploring" practices is made easier. This template should identify district practices that are in the "transforming" category, i.e., those that have been infused throughout the daily practice of the district and truly affect student learning in a positive way.

Tool 4. Assessment Standards Crosswalk

This crosswalk connects the National Forum on Assessment principles used in this resource guide with those recommended by the Maine Assessment System Design Team and the Local Assessment principles developed by this team at the Sunday River session.

Tool 5. Local Assessment Seminar Feedback Form

This form is a sample evaluation form for district or regional local assessment system seminars.

Tool 1. Local Assessment System Inventory

District: _____

	K-2				3-4				5-8				9-12			
	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R
ELA	LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale			
	District				District				District				District			
	School				School				School				School			
	K-2				3-4				5-8				9-12			
	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R
MATH	LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale			
	District				District				District				District			
	School				School				School				School			

Key: G = grade T = time of admin: Fall Winter Spring R = report level (I - individual or S - school)

Local Assessment System Inventory (cont.)

District: _____

	K-2				3-4				5-8				9-12			
	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R
SCIENCE	LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale			
	District				District				District				District			
	School				School				School				School			
	K-2				3-4				5-8				9-12			
	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R
SOCIAL STUDIES	LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale			
	District				District				District				District			
	School				School				School				School			

Key: G = grade T = time of admin: Fall Winter Spring R = report level (I - individual or S - school)

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Local Assessment System Inventory (cont.)

District: _____

	K-2				3-4				5-8				9-12			
	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R
Modern & Classical Languages	LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale			
	District				District				District				District			
	School				School				School				School			
	K-2				3-4				5-8				9-12			
	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R
HEALTH & PE	LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale			
	District				District				District				District			
	School				School				School				School			

Key: G = grade T = time of admin: Fall Winter Spring R = report level (I - individual or S - school)

Local Assessment System Inventory (cont.)

District: _____

	K-2				3-4				5-8				9-12			
	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R
Visual & Performing Arts	LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale			
	District				District				District				District			
	School				School				School				School			
	K-2				3-4				5-8				9-12			
	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R	Tool	G	T	R
CAREER PREP	LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale				LG Scale			
	District				District				District				District			
	School				School				School				School			

Key: G = grade T = time of admin: Fall Winter Spring R = report level (I - individual or S - school)

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Tool 1A. Local Assessment System Inventory

District: _____

Summary Sheet

Tools	Learning Results Content Area	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Tool 2.
The Assessment Principles and Indicators Narrative

District: _____

Principle 1

THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT IS TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING.

Describe how your district's current assessment effort aligns with these principles, with the specified indicators, and with any other indicators that apply.

HIGHLIGHTING

1. Assessments are based on curriculum and Maine's Learning Results that are clearly understood by students, educators and parents.

5. Assessment Systems allow students multiple ways to demonstrate their learning.

8. Teachers employ a variety of assessment methods and obtain multiple forms of evidence about student learning for planning and implementing instruction and for evaluating, working with, and making decisions about students.

and any others that apply .

Principle 2

ASSESSMENT FOR OTHER PURPOSES SUPPORTS STUDENT LEARNING.

HIGHLIGHTING

7. Teachers view assessments for accountability purposes as consistent with and not harmful to curriculum, instruction, and high quality classroom assessment.

10. Technical standards for assessment systems are developed and used to ensure that assessments provide accurate and comprehensive information, measure progress toward learning goals in ways that are consistent with how students learn, and are used appropriately.

and any others that apply

Tool 2. The Assessment Principles and Indicators Narrative (cont.)

District: _____

Principle 3
ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS ARE FAIR TO ALL STUDENTS.

Describe how your district's current assessment effort aligns with these principles, with the specified indicators, and with any other indicators that apply.

Principle 4
PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION AND DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT ASSESSMENT.

Tool 2. The Assessment Principles and Indicators Narrative (cont.)

District: _____

Principle 5

THE BROAD COMMUNITY PARTICIPATES IN ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT.

HIGHLIGHTING

3. Teachers, schools and districts educate parents and community members about the meaning and interpretation of assessment results.

5. Schools and teachers provide parents the opportunity to discuss classroom assessment practices.

and any others that apply

Describe how your district's current assessment effort aligns with these principles, with the specified indicators, and with any other indicators that apply.

Principle 6

COMMUNICATION ABOUT ASSESSMENT IS REGULAR AND CLEAR.

Tool 2. The Assessment Principles and Indicators Narrative (cont.)

District: _____

Principle 7

ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS ARE REGULARLY REVIEWED AND IMPROVED.

Describe how your district's current assessment effort aligns with these principles, with the specified indicators, and with any other indicators that apply.

Tool 3. Self-Assessment Continuum

PRINCIPLE 1: The Primary Purpose for Assessment is to Improve Student Learning
Reflecting on the evidence presented and the indicators 1-17 listed on page 7, gauge the appropriate point on the following continuum. Note the particular evidence and indicators that contributed to the decision in the space below the applicable descriptor.

EXPLORING	TRANSITIONING	TRANSFORMING
Within the K-12 system, some of the attributes are evident in an isolated fashion.	Within the K-12 system, several of the attributes are evident across the system **OR** many of the attributes are evident in limited parts of the K-12 system.	Within the K-12 system, most of the attributes are evident across the system and have become integrated into policy and practice.
EVIDENCE	**EVIDENCE**	**EVIDENCE**

PRINCIPLE 2: Assessment for Other Purposes Supports Student Learning

Reflecting on the evidence presented and the indicators 1-12 listed on page 9, gauge the appropriate point on the following continuum. Note the particular evidence and indicators that contributed to the decision in the space below the applicable descriptor.

EXPLORING	TRANSITIONING	TRANSFORMING
Within the K-12 system, some of the attributes are evident in an isolated fashion.	Within the K-12 system, several of the attributes are evident across the system **OR** many of the attributes are evident in limited parts of the K-12 system.	Within the K-12 system, most of the attributes are evident across the system and have become integrated into policy and practice.
EVIDENCE	**EVIDENCE**	**EVIDENCE**

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PRINCIPLE 3: Assessment Systems Are Fair To All Students

Reflecting on the evidence presented and the indicators 1-14 listed on page 11, gauge the appropriate point on the following continuum. Note the particular evidence and indicators that contributed to the decision in the space below the applicable descriptor.

EXPLORING	TRANSITIONING	TRANSFORMING
Within the K-12 system, some of the attributes are evident in an isolated fashion.	Within the K-12 system, several of the attributes are evident across the system **OR** many of the attributes are evident in limited parts of the K-12 system.	Within the K-12 system, most of the attributes are evident across the system and have become integrated into policy and practice.
EVIDENCE	**EVIDENCE**	**EVIDENCE**

PRINCIPLE 4: Professional Collaboration and Development Support Assessment
Reflecting on the evidence presented and the indicators 1-12 listed on page 13, gauge the appropriate point on the following continuum. Note the particular evidence and indicators that contributed to the decision in the space below the applicable descriptor.

EXPLORING	TRANSITIONING	TRANSFORMING
Within the K-12 system, some of the attributes are evident in an isolated fashion.	Within the K-12 system, several of the attributes are evident across the system **OR** many of the attributes are evident in limited parts of the K-12 system.	Within the K-12 system, most of the attributes are evident across the system and have become integrated into policy and practice.
EVIDENCE	**EVIDENCE**	**EVIDENCE**

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PRINCIPLE 5: The Broad Community Participates in Assessment Development
Reflecting on the evidence presented and the indicators 1-8 listed on page 15, gauge the appropriate point on the following continuum. Note the particular evidence and indicators that contributed to the decision in the space below the applicable descriptor.

EXPLORING	TRANSITIONING	TRANSFORMING
Within the K-12 system, some of the attributes are evident in an isolated fashion.	Within the K-12 system, several of the attributes are evident across the system **OR** many of the attributes are evident in limited parts of the K-12 system.	Within the K-12 system, most of the attributes are evident across the system and have become integrated into policy and practice.
EVIDENCE	**EVIDENCE**	**EVIDENCE**

PRINCIPLE 6: Communication About Assessment Is Regular and Clear

Reflecting on the evidence presented and the indicators 1-13 listed on page 17, gauge the appropriate point on the following continuum. Note the particular evidence and indicators that contributed to the decision in the space below the applicable descriptor.

EXPLORING	TRANSITIONING	TRANSFORMING
Within the K-12 system, some of the attributes are evident in an isolated fashion.	Within the K-12 system, several of the attributes are evident across the system **OR** many of the attributes are evident in limited parts of the K-12 system.	Within the K-12 system, most of the attributes are evident across the system and have become integrated into policy and practice.
EVIDENCE	**EVIDENCE**	**EVIDENCE**

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PRINCIPLE 7: Assessment Systems Are Regularly Reviewed and Improved

Reflecting on the evidence presented and the indicators 1- 7 listed on page 19, gauge the appropriate point on the following continuum. Note the particular evidence and indicators that contributed to the decision in the space below the applicable descriptor.

EXPLORING	TRANSITIONING	TRANSFORMING
Within the K-12 system, some of the attributes are evident in an isolated fashion.	Within the K-12 system, several of the attributes are evident across the system **OR** many of the attributes are evident in limited parts of the K-12 system.	Within the K-12 system, most of the attributes are evident across the system and have become integrated into policy and practice.
EVIDENCE	**EVIDENCE**	**EVIDENCE**

Tool 3A. LOCAL ASSESSMENT SEMINAR ◆ SELF-ASSESSMENT SUMMARY ◆

TEAM _____

Principle 1	Principle 2	Principle 3	Principle 4	Principle 5	Principle 6	Principle 7
E T T	E T T	E T T	E T T	E T T	E T T	E T T

STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

SIGNIFICANT FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

NEEDS AND NEXT STEPS:

Tool 4. Assessment Standards Crosswalk

MAINE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM Design Team	LOCAL ASSESSMENT Sunday River	NATIONAL FORUM ON ASSESSMENT
Purposes: To *inform* and guide teaching and learning; To *monitor* and hold educational units accountable in achieving the LRs; To *certify* achievement of Maine's Learning Results.	A. Primary purpose is informing learning and teaching through diagnostic, formative and summative assessments.	**1. The Primary Purpose of Assessment is to Improve Student Learning.** **2. Assessment for Other Purposes Supports Student Learning.**
Align with Maine's Learning Results • Set performance standards and define proficiency; • Challenge all students; • Document student attainment of the LRs; • Address national and international standards.	B. Include the alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessments with LRs. E. Provides clear assessments and clear performance standards. H. Provides for local certification of LR knowledge, skills and processes.	1.1 Assessments are based on curriculum and desired outcomes that are clearly understood by students, educators and parents.
Utilize Multiple Measures of Learning • Include a balanced and appropriate mix of strategies; • Enable student demonstration of learning at different times in different ways; • Include state and local components.	C. Includes the selection of multiple measures of assessment. D. Assessments are matched with purpose(s), LR targets, participants and audiences.	

Tool 4. Assessment Standards Crosswalk (cont.)

MAINE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM Design Team	LOCAL ASSESSMENT Sunday River	NATIONAL FORUM ON ASSESSMENT
Ensure Fair Assessment for All Students • Provide alternatives and modifications, including technology, to meet unique needs including those of LEP students. • Provide opportunity to demonstrate learning at different times for different students. • Provide avenues of appeal. • Be free of bias.	F. Provides for equity, fairness and openness in assessment.	**3. Assessment Systems Are Fair to All Students.** 3.3 Assessment practices recognize and incorporate the variety of cultural backgrounds of students who are assessed. 3.6 Assessments are created or adapted to meet the needs of students who are learning English. 3.7 Assessments are created or adapted and accommodations made to meet the needs of students who have a disability. 3.10 Committees of persons knowledgeable about the diverse student population review large-scale assessments for bias and are able to modify, remove, or replace items, tasks, rubrics, or other elements of the assessment, if they find them biased or offensive.
Utilize Recognized, Relevant Technical Standards for Assessment • Produce accurate and consistent results over time (Reliability). • Match the purpose for which it is designed (Validity). • Provide accurate data to make informed decisions about students.	G. Provides for consistency in the results of standardized assessment across and within schools.	3.12 Technical standards are developed and used to ensure that assessments do not have harmful consequences for student learning or teaching. 1.15 Teachers use current principles and technical concepts of assessment ... in developing and analyzing their classroom assessments.

Tool 4. Assessment Standards Crosswalk (cont.)

MAINE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM Design Team	LOCAL ASSESSMENT Sunday River	NATIONAL FORUM ON ASSESSMENT
Provide Understandable Information to Educators, Parents, Students, Public and Media • Provide evidence to document progress toward the achievement of district and state LRs. • Provide information regarding the components of the system.		**6. Communication About Assessment is Regular and Clear.** 6.5 Schools, districts, and states report achievement information to the public in terms of agreed upon learning standards. 6.10 Schools, districts, and states use many avenues of communication to inform the public. 6.12 Public reports present assessment information in the context of education programs, social data, resources, school environment and other outcomes.
Provide Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers, Administrators and Future Educators • Design and develop assessments; • Score assessments and interpret results; • Conduct action research to monitor student accomplishments; • Design alternatives and modifications needed for assessing students with unique needs.	J. Depends upon the engagement of professionals in developing assessment literacy.	**4. Professional Collaboration and Development Support Assessment** 4.7 Educators work together to determine the professional development needed for improving their capabilities as assessors. 4.8 Educators actively participate in professional development for improving their capabilities as assessors. 4.5 Teachers and administrators know how to use the results of large-scale assessment information for program and school improvement.

Tool 4. Assessment Standards Crosswalk (cont.)

MAINE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM Design Team	LOCAL ASSESSMENT Sunday River	NATIONAL FORUM ON ASSESSMENT
Be Practical and Manageable • Establish clear policies, procedures and practices; • Use current technology; • Use an efficient data management system; • Be revised and updated regularly; • Integrate curriculum, instruction, and assessment to minimize time and maximize learning; • Be manageable at the school and classroom level.	K. Includes a comprehensive, cohesive and coordinated management system that supports learning and teaching and certifies achievement. L. Provides for renewal of the assessment system through periodic review of data results and professional development.	**7. Assessment Systems are Regularly Reviewed and Improved**

Tool 5. Local Assessment System Seminar

May 6-7, 1998
Feedback Form

Check appropriate role:

□ Presentation Team □ Critical Friend Panel □ Liaison □ Observer □ Other

1. How useful was the Local Assessment System **Inventory**?

1	2	3	N/A
Not Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful	Not Applicable

Best Features of LAS **Inventory**:_____

_____

_____

Suggestions for changes to LAS **Inventory**:_____

_____

_____

2. How useful was the Local Assessment System **Summary Sheet**?

1	2	3	N/A
Not Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful	Not Applicable

Best Features of LAS **Summary Sheet:**_____

_____

_____

Suggestions for changes to LAS **Summary Sheet:**_____

_____

_____

3. How useful was the Local Assessment System **Principles/Evidence Sheet**?

1	2	3	N/A
Not Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful	Not Applicable

Best Features of LAS **Principles/Evidence Sheet**:_____

_____

_____

Suggestions for changes to LAS **Principles/Evidence Sheet:**_____

_____

_____

4. How useful was the Local Assessment System **Self-Assessment Continuum**?

1	2	3	N/A
Not Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful	Not Applicable

Best Features of LAS **Self-Assessment Continuum**:_____

_____

_____

Suggestions for changes to LAS **Self-Assessment Continuum**:_____

_____

_____

5. How useful were the Local Assessment System **Showcase Presentations**?

1	2	3	N/A
Not Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful	Not Applicable

Best Features of LAS **Showcase Presentations**:_____

_____

_____

Suggestions for changes to LAS **Showcase Presentations**:_____

_____

_____

6. How useful were the Local Assessment System **Self-Assessment Sessions**?

1	2	3	N/A
Not Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful	Not Applicable

Best Features of LAS **Self-Assessment Sessions**:_____

_____

_____

Suggestions for changes to LAS **Self-Assessment Sessions**:_____

_____

_____

7. How useful were the **meetings with the critical friends?**

1	2	3	N/A
Not Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful	Not Applicable

Best Features of the **meetings with the critical friends**:_____

_____

_____

Suggestions for changes to the **meetings with the critical friends**:_____

_____

8. How useful were the **break out sessions?**

1	2	3	N/A
Not Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful	Not Applicable

Best Features of the **break out sessions**:_____

_____

_____

Suggestions for changes to the **break out sessions**:_____

_____

_____

9. How useful were the **report outs?**

1	2	3	N/A
Not Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful	Not Applicable

Best Features of the **report outs**:_____

_____

_____

Suggestions for changes to the **report outs**:_____

_____

_____

10. What do you think about Principles and Indicators for Student Assessment Systems as a set of standards to guide local assessment system development?_____

_____

_____

11. Other comments/suggestions: _____

_____

_____

12. Please list below resources which you would recommend as useful in developing a local assessment system (include all types of resources - books, videos, professional development experiences...).

List Title of resource - publisher (date if applicable and you know it). If possible, provide an annotation for each which will link the resource to the work of developing a local assessment system.

_____

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ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bibliography and Resources

Districts and observers were asked to cite resources that had been helpful to them in their assessment work. Districts and observers cited a number of organizations that they had tapped as resources. These included non-profit educational foundations, the regional labs, and private companies engaged in assessment development. While these organizations are not listed formally in this document, districts included in the case studies may be contacted regarding resources. Where annotations were provided from districts or observers, they are listed below without editorial change.

Armstrong, Thomas (1994). Multiple intelligences in the classroom. Alexandria VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Bridges, Lois (1995). Assessment--continuous learning. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers. Available from Stenhouse Publishers, 431 York St., York, Maine 03909. This is a collection of assessment strategies that focus on learning.

Educators in Connecticut's Pomeraug Regional School District 15 (1996). Performance-based learning and assessment. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. This is a collection of sample performance tasks with narrative explanations.

Gardner, H. Multiple intelligences: The theory in practice (1994). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Glaude, Cathy and others. Using assessment to drive school change: A collections of learnings. Bowdoinham, Maine: Maine Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. This publication reflects the best thinking on assessment at this time. It is a snapshot of issues.

Meyerson, Robert J. and others (1997). Dimensions of learning, teacher's manual. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. This outlines best practices in instructional strategies and assessment practices.

Meyerson, Robert J. and others (1993). Assessing student outcomes: Performance assessment using the dimensions of learning model. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. This outlines performance assessment using the Dimensions of Learning model.

Meyerson, Robert J. and others (1994). Improving science and mathematics education--a toolkit for professional developers: Alternative assessment. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Size, Theodore. (1984) Horace's compromise: The dilemma of the American high school. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Sizer, Theodore. (1992) Horace's school: Redesigning the American high school. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Bibliography

These resources have been selected to provide a broad overview on assessment. Many of these readings may provide starting points for district wide conversations.

Baker, E., & O'Neil, H. (1995). Diversity, assessment, and equity in educational reform. In M. Nettles & A. Nettles (Eds.), Equity and excellence in educational testing and assessment (pp. 69-87) Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

The authors review performance assessments and discuss the potential of such assessments to provide more equitable assessment measures for diverse student populations. They include a checklist of suggestions to keep equity in the foreground when using performance assessments.

Brandt, R. (Ed.). (1992) Readings from Educational Leadership: Performance assessment. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

The first section of this overview of assessment includes several articles that address the uses of and concerns about large-scale, norm-referenced testing. The portfolio section includes expert opinion from such alternative assessment pioneers as Dennie Palmer Wolf and Howard Gardner, and concrete examples and how-tos from classrooms and districts.

Checkley, K. (1997). The first seven...and the eighth: A conversation with Howard Gardner. Educational Leadership, 55, p. 8 - 13.

In this interview, Gardner gives a brief update of his multiple intelligences theory and addresses an eighth component, the "naturalist" intelligence. He addresses changes that have occurred in his workplace as a result of the theory and indicates the connection of multiple intelligence theory to performance assessment.

Coladarci, T. and Woodward, S. (1998). Student assessment: What school administrators need to know and be able to do. Penquis Info Pack. Orono, ME: Center for Research and Evaluation, University of Maine.

This document lists the competencies needed by administrators to fully supervise and lead assessment efforts and will provide administrators an opportunity for self-assessment.

Darling-Hammond, L. et. al. (1993). Creating learner-centered accountability. New York, NY: National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching (NCREST) .

Darling-Hammond and colleagues review the potential areas of accountability in education. They then present four extensive case studies of learner-centered school

practices from New York City. Case studies detail the engagement of students at various grade levels and school structures in curriculum and assessment practices.

Gearhart, M. & Wolf, S. (1997). Issues in portfolio assessment: Assessing writing processes from their products. Educational Assessment, 4, pp. 264 - 296.

This article examined four classrooms piloting a large-scale portfolio assessment. The authors raise thoughtful questions regarding the assurance of validity in such work.

Glickman, Carl D. (1993). Renewing America's schools: A guide for school-based action. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Glickman addresses school renewal in the larger social policy context and outlines a three-part structure for approaching the task.

Greenhawk, J. (1997) Multiple intelligences meet standards. Educational Leadership, 55, p. 62 - 64.

This brief article describes the introduction of multiple intelligence theory in a standards-based environment. It addresses preparing children immersed in multiple intelligence-based classrooms for more traditional testing situations.

Hebert, Elizabeth A. Lessons learned about student portfolios. (1998). Phi Delta Kappan, 8, April, p. 583 - 585.

A principal offers some lessons from her school's ten years of work with portfolios, including advice on content, ownership, and parent involvement.

Hill, B. C., Kamber, P. & Norwick, L. (1994). Six ways to make student portfolios more meaningful and manageable. Instructor, July/August.

A brief and practical article intended to help practitioners initiate portfolios or refine their use of them.

Hill, B.C. & Ruptic, C. (1994). Practical aspects of authentic assessment: Putting the pieces together. Norwood MA: Chistopher-Gordon Publishers.

This book is described its authors as "an interactive text". The first section gives diagrams and forms to guide discussions about educational philosophy and the integration of assessment. Six chapters are devoted to the practical development of assessments and include many templates and practical techniques. Other chapters are devoted to advice concerning the assessment of special education students, parental involvement and reporting student growth. Appendices contain checklists of Assessment Tools.

Jacobs, Heidi H. (1997). Mapping the big picture: Integrating curriculum and assessment K-12. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Jacobs details an approach to curriculum mapping based on the school calendar and suggests that this approach may help schools develop more "developmentally appropriate" assessments. An appendix contains numerous sample maps.

Lewbel, S. (Ed.) (1997). A focus on performance-based learning and assessment. Journal of the New England League of Middle Schools, 4.

This issue is nearly entirely devoted to performance assessment. It includes philosophical discussion regarding the need for and uses of assessment, and a number of articles describing the use of performance assessments in particular classrooms and districts. Of particular interest for district wide assessment systems is an interview with K. Michael Hibbard, Superintendent of District 15 in Connecticut, whose work is cited by a participating Local Assessment System Seminar District, and an essay by an eighth-grader explaining the value of assessment lists.

Koelsch, N., Estrin, E., & Farr, B. (1995). Guide to developing equitable performance assessments. San Francisco: WestEd.

This resource addresses the role of language and culture in performance assessment and then gives strategies for creating such tasks. It includes guidelines and materials.

Murphy, S., Bergamini, J. & Rooney, P. (1997). The Impact of Large-Scale Portfolio Assessment Programs on Classroom Practice: Case Studies of the New Standards Field-Trial Portfolio. Educational Assessment, 4, pp. 297 - 333. The authors contrast two classrooms piloting the portfolio assessment and consider the impact, positive and negative, on classroom practice.

O'Malley, J.M. & Pierce, L.V. (1996). Authentic assessment for English language learners. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

This is a practical, research-based handbook designed to help teachers in developing authentic assessment for English language learners. Practitioners are given examples from classroom situations. There is a recognition that these practices will need to be integrated with existing classroom work.

Perrone, V. (Ed.) (1991). Expanding student assessment. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

The ten articles of this highly readable volume examine different facets of assessment. One describes the mismatch between teaching methods that stress higher order thinking skills and some norm-referenced testing through the lens of a particular classroom during annual testing. Others are descriptions by practitioners of their approaches to assessment. Alternative assessment approaches in math, writing, and science are discussed in separate chapters. In the final essay, the author discusses a range of problems in testing and advocates the use of sampling techniques.

Ysseldyke, J., Olsen, K., and Thurlow, M. (1997) Issues and considerations in alternate assessments. Minneapolis, MN: National Center on Educational Outcomes.
This brief report raises a number of issues that arise when developing alternate assessments, including who should participate in these assessments and are alternate assessments intended only for students who are following an alternate curriculum.

Newman, F.M., Secada, W. and Wehlage, G. (1995) A guide to authentic instruction and assessment: Vision, standards and scoring. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center for Educational Research.

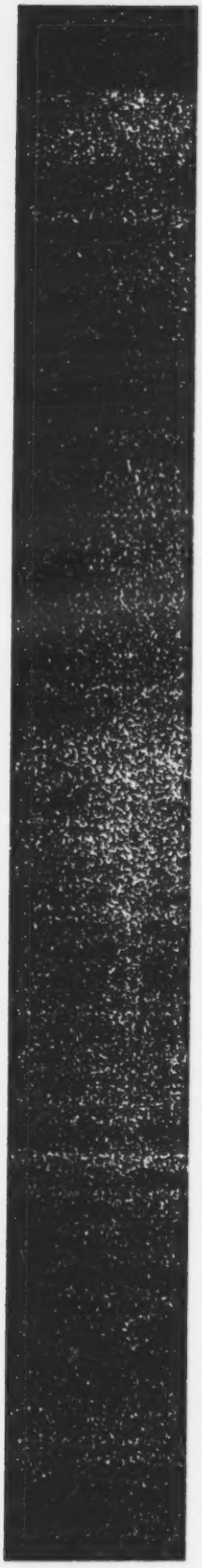
The authors build their case that the authenticity of student performance matters and that it can be assessed using the criteria of "construction of knowledge, through disciplined inquiry, to produce discourse, products and performances that have meaning beyond success in school". They provide examples of assessment tasks, instruction, and student performances, and describe why these tasks or activities meet certain standards of authenticity. The authors suggest that appropriate use of the Guide is to stimulate reflection and discussion in order to "promote authentic student performance."

Winfield, L. (1995). Performance-based assessments: Contributor or detractor to equity? In M. Nettles and A. Nettles (Eds.), Equity and excellence in educational testing and assessment (pp. 221-241). Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Winfield looks at the fairness of newer types of assessments and suggests that other factors, such as instructional conditions prior to testing and the contexts in which testing occurs, must be considered to ensure that these assessments do create greater equity.

Wolf, D., Bixby, J., Glenn, J., & Gardner, H. (1991). To use their minds well: Investigating new forms of student assessment. In G. Grant (Ed.), Review of research in education (pp. 31-74). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

This article reviews how we got to large-scale standardized testing and a view of intelligence as fixed. They contrast this "culture of testing" with a "culture of assessment" and review some of the necessary conditions for creating a more equitable system.



PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS FOR STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

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INTRODUCTION

The National Forum on Assessment (Forum), a coalition of education and civil rights organizations, views high quality assessment as essential to high quality education. The Forum believes that powerful, fair assessment methods used by skilled educators are necessary for educating *all* our children to high standards.

Across the nation, assessment of student learning is undergoing profound change at the same time that reforms are taking place in standards, curriculum, instruction, school structure, the preparation and professional development of teachers, and the relationships among parents, communities, schools, governments, and business. The Forum offers these *Principles and Indicators* to help guide the development of assessment systems that can meet the needs of this changed environment.

The heart of the *Principles and Indicators* is the understanding that the primary purpose of assessment is to serve learning. The assessments supported by these *Principles* are:

- grounded in solid knowledge of how people learn;
- connected to clear statements of what is important for students to learn;
- flexible enough to meet the needs of a diverse student body; and
- able to provide students with the opportunity to actively produce work and demonstrate their learning.

Purposes of the Principles

These *Principles* are intended to help transform assessment systems and practices as part of wider school reform. Assessment should support and be integrated with changes in instruction and curriculum that improve student learning.

The *Principles* apply to assessment *systems* and call for coherence among the various assessment practices and instruments used in education. Assessment systems employ practices and methods that are consistent with learning goals, curriculum, instruction, and current knowledge of how students learn. Coherence can be achieved by ensuring that all assessments, both classroom and large-scale, support important learning and are compatible with how students learn.

- Classroom assessments are those used by teachers with their students to directly assist learning and evaluate achievement.
- Large-scale assessments are those mandated, designed, conducted, and reported from outside the classroom, usually for district or state evaluation or accountability purposes.

Classroom assessment occupies the great majority of assessment time and is the primary means through which assessment can inform instruction and learning. Therefore, the *Principles* treat transformed and strengthened classroom assessment practices as the core of the larger assessment system. Indeed, the *Principles* view assessment systems from the perspective of classrooms with a special focus on the impact of assessment on instruction and learning.

Large-scale assessments are important because of their impact on classroom practices as well as on program quality and policy decisions. Not all requirements of classroom assessments can apply directly to large-scale assessments, and vice versa. However, the essential premise of the *Principles*, that assessment practices and instruments must support improved student learning, is true for both classroom and large-scale assessments.

Large-scale assessments for accountability primarily should use sampling procedures to help evaluate and improve school programs. Accountability can be based on examinations and on classroom assessments. In using classroom assessments for accountability, various methods of evaluating and summarizing ongoing student work and assessments can be used to obtain information about the achievement of programs and groups of students.

The evaluation of a student's work done over years in school also provides the basis for certification of individual achievement, such as for high school graduation. Such high-stakes decisions should not be made on the basis of any single assessment.

In recent years, research and practice have provided a strong base for transforming classroom assessment practices. Large-scale performance assessments that can support important learning are in an earlier stage of development, but knowledge and capability in this area, from technical concepts to practice, are growing rapidly. Given the centrality of classroom assessment in these *Principles*, further research is needed to establish exactly how large-scale assessments can best support classroom assessments, while providing additional valuable information.

As a vision of and guide to change, these *Principles* serve a different purpose from that served by technical standards for assessment. It is essential that technical standards be developed and used, and that they be appropriate for the various methods and purposes of assessment. The Forum recognizes that technical requirements may vary for different levels and purposes of assessment.

Each *principle* in this document defines a broad goal; it provides context and guidance for developing or refining an important part of the overall assessment system. The *indicators* are lists of more precise statements that can be used as a checklist in evaluating or developing assessment systems and their parts.

Taken as a whole, these *Principles* reflect what the Forum believes is the best that assessment can be and do. They are, in this sense, "ideal," and the language used in the *Principles* describes what should be, not what now exists. We understand that they will not be implemented immediately or with great ease. We do firmly hold, however, that education systems must move toward meeting these assessment principles.

Uses of the Principles

The *Principles and Indicators* have multiple uses for a range of practitioners and a variety of audiences. They can be used, together with appropriate technical standards, for the general purposes of developing, refining, or evaluating student assessment systems. For example:

1. Policymakers who are developing new systems of assessment at the national, state, and district levels can use them to rethink the role of large-scale assessments and ensure support for classroom-based assessment.
2. Teachers and administrators can employ them to guide assessment reform in classrooms and schools.
3. Schools of education can use them in teacher preparation, while teachers and other educators can utilize them in their continuing professional development.
4. Community, parent, advocacy, and business organizations can use them to evaluate and help improve student assessment systems.
5. Higher education institutions can employ them in reforming their admissions and placement policies and in their own instructional and assessment practices.
6. Educational researchers can use them in designing research as well as in conducting evaluations of schools and systems.

Signing the Principles

At the end of this document is a list of organizations and individuals that have reviewed the *Principles and Indicators for Student Assessment Systems* and recommend their consideration by educators and organizations for use in evaluating, revising and developing assessment systems. Also, there is a form that additional organizations and individuals can use to add their name to the list. The Forum will regularly update the list of signers.

The Forum welcomes comments on these *Principles and Indicators*. Send the sign-on form and comments to:

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e-mail FairTest@aol.com

Educational Foundations for High Quality Assessment

Developing the Principles and Indicators *required the Forum to define underlying beliefs and identify the essential conditions that enable high quality schooling. These form a foundation for high quality assessment systems.*

The Forum agrees on the following beliefs:

- All students deserve the opportunity to learn high-level content in and across subject areas and to learn in a resource-rich, supportive environment.
- Thinking is the most basic and important skill.
- High achievement takes many forms.
- Equity demands equivalence in the standards of learning for all students and in the instructional quality offered to each student, together with the opportunity to demonstrate learning in a variety of ways.
- Family and community support is essential to student success.

The Forum views the following four conditions as necessary for schools to ensure successful learning and support the assessment practices promoted by the Principles:

1. *Schools organize to support the multiple learning needs and approaches of all their members.*

Schools foster a supportive environment for inquiry, intellectual challenge, and cooperation. The school climate and professional development for teachers and administrators promote respect for and inclusion of females and males from all ethnic, disability, language, socio-economic, and cultural groups. The school works toward the elimination of racism, sexism, and bias. It provides a safe environment for all students. It democratically involves all its members in shaping the school's learning and governing life, while recognizing that students require guidance in their growth to adulthood and independent learning and that students, educators, families, and support staff have different roles in assuring student success.

The school recognizes that learning is not housed in just one building. It develops collaborative external relationships so that students interact with and learn from members of the wider community, who, in turn, are welcomed by the school.

The school continually evaluates itself in order to improve. Assessment focuses on providing information used to strengthen student learning and on documenting progress. The school helps prepare educators to evaluate all students fairly. Assessments provide useful information on the particular knowledge and abilities students have or have not yet developed, in ways that will guide further learning and the improvement of curriculum and instruction.

2. *Schools work to understand how learning takes place and what facilitates learning.*

Learning is an intellectually active and social process shaped by the learner's experiences, perceptions, and culture. Schools provide the environment, curriculum,

and instruction to facilitate active learning by both students and educators. Educators use new knowledge on learning to improve teaching and assessment.

Because learning requires feedback and reflection, assessment is an essential component of the process. To be helpful, an assessment system uses methods that are compatible with how different students learn, provides information on how each student learns, and offers a variety of methods and opportunities for demonstrating achievement.

3. ***Schools establish clear statements of desired learning for all students and help all students achieve them.***

Such statements are also called learning goals or content standards. They describe broad, important intellectual competencies—knowledge, skills, understandings, and habits of mind—that students should acquire and be able to demonstrate. These include important learning in and across subject areas, with a focus on thoughtful application and meaningful use of knowledge.

In order to establish general public agreement, statements of desired learning are determined through open discussion among subject-matter experts, educators, families of students, policymakers, students, and other members of the wider community, including advocacy, business, higher education, and civic organizations.

Assessment systems rely on practices and methods that are integrated conceptually with curriculum and instruction which, in turn, are based on the statements of desired learning. Schools use assessments to help students learn as well as to document and evaluate their learning.

4. ***All schools have equitable and adequate learning resources and classroom conditions, including capable teachers, a rich curriculum, safe and hospitable buildings, sufficient equipment and materials, and essential support services.***

Taken together, these conditions provide an opportunity to learn. Class sizes are small enough that teachers are able to get to know and work closely with all their students and use active approaches to learning and assessment. Tracking and full-time, long-term placements out of the mainstream classroom generally do not occur, but if determined necessary, are periodically assessed for effectiveness. Teachers have sufficient time to plan learning and assessment activities, discuss student learning, and work with fellow teachers. They have access to adequate professional development resources.

Reports to the public on student learning include valid and coherent information on available learning resources and conditions. This is necessary in order to help evaluate any impact resources have on learning and to facilitate obtaining needed resources if they are absent. It also helps create a climate in which students are not held responsible for the absence of equitable or adequate resources.

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This picture is ideal. It provides a vision of excellent education for all students to which good assessment makes a vital contribution. Assessment reform and broader school reform can and should move forward together.

PRINCIPLE 1 The Primary Purpose of Assessment Is to Improve Student Learning

Assessment systems, including classroom and large-scale assessment, are organized around the primary purpose of improving student learning.

Assessment systems provide useful and accurate information about student learning. They employ practices and methods that are consistent with learning goals, curriculum, instruction, and current knowledge of how students learn. Educators assess and document student learning through an appropriate balance of methods that can include structured and informal observations and interviews, projects and tasks, experiments, tests, performances and exhibitions, audio and video tapes, portfolios, and journals. The consequences of using an assessment or a particular method are evaluated regularly to ensure that its effects are, in fact, educationally beneficial.

Classroom assessment is the primary means through which assessment affects learning. It is integrated with curriculum and instruction so that teaching, learning and assessing flow in a continuous process. By documenting and evaluating student work over time, teachers obtain information for understanding student progress in ways that can guide future instruction. Assessment also provides opportunities for self-reflection and evaluation by the student.

Teachers are the primary users and developers of classroom assessments. They understand and apply, as appropriate for classroom work, current technical concepts of effective assessment practices, particularly validity and reliability. Individually and in groups, they analyze the impact of different assessments on student learning and use the results of their analyses to improve their assessment practices.

For classroom and large-scale assessments, scoring guides ("rubrics") for evaluating student work are stated in positive terms (what a student can do) and are appropriate to the work being done. They present a coherent picture of how students can develop and improve their performance.

No assessment method or practice is used that narrows or distorts the curriculum or instructional practices. Multiple-choice and short-answer methods, if used, constitute a limited part, in time or impact, of the total assessment system. History shows that their use, if too prominent, can skew instruction away from methods of teaching that support important learning.

In documenting student achievement, systems focus on providing information grounded in clearly defined learning goals for students and information about a student's progress. Therefore, assessments intended to rank order students or compare students with each other are not a significant part, in time or impact, of the total assessment system.

Principle 1: Indicators

1. Assessments are based on curriculum and desired learning outcomes that are clearly understood by students, educators, and parents.
2. Assessment practices are compatible with current knowledge about how learning takes place and allow for variety in how students learn.
3. Assessment systems enable a process of continuous feedback for the student.
4. Most assessments allow students to demonstrate understanding by thoughtfully applying knowledge and constructing responses.
5. Assessment systems allow students multiple ways to demonstrate their learning.
6. Assessment systems include opportunities for individual and group work.
7. Classroom assessments are integrated with curriculum and instruction.
8. Teachers employ a variety of assessment methods and obtain multiple forms of evidence about student learning for planning and implementing instruction and for evaluating, working with, and making decisions about students.
9. Teachers can explain how their assessment practices and instruments help improve teaching and how they provide useful information for working with students.
10. Student self-reflection and evaluation are part of the assessment system.
11. Schools establish procedures for enabling classroom-based student assessment information to follow each student from year to year.
12. Assessment methods, samples of assessments, scoring guides or rubrics, and examples of work of varying kind and quality are discussed and understood by students.
13. Scoring guides (rubrics) state in positive terms what students can do and enable users to analyze student strengths and needs in order to plan further instruction.
14. Educators make clear to students the uses and consequences of each assessment.
15. Teachers use current principles and technical concepts of assessment, particularly validity and reliability, in developing and analyzing their classroom assessments.
16. Multiple-choice and short-answer methods are a limited part, in time or impact, of the total assessment system.
17. Assessments intended to rank order students or compare students with each other are not a significant part, in time or impact, of the total assessment system.

PRINCIPLE 2 Assessment for Other Purposes Supports Student Learning

Assessment systems report on and certify student learning and provide information for school improvement and accountability by using practices that support important learning.

In order to support learning, assessment for these purposes conforms to the spirit and general requirements of Principle 1. When teachers, schools, districts, and states all use assessment practices and methods which are consistent with learning goals and current knowledge of how students learn, they establish the basis for a coherent system which meets a variety of purposes.

To report student learning to families, students and other educators, to certify student achievement, or to make important educational decisions, teachers analyze assessment information from ongoing school work and assessments. Important decisions about individuals, such as program placement, grade promotion, or graduation, are not made on the basis of any single assessment.

To provide information useful for school improvement, teachers and other school staff primarily rely on assessment information that is based on regular, continuing work by the school's students. External or large-scale assessments provide additional and corroborative information.

To provide information for accountability, the school, the district, and the state gather a variety of assessment information that they can use to inform the public, provide assistance to schools and districts, and make decisions about programs. This information can come from a combination of classroom-based assessment information (such as portfolio reviews) and external or large-scale assessments (such as examinations). To evaluate programs efficiently, districts and states rely on various forms of sampling, to the extent feasible. Technical standards for assessment are revised or developed to ensure they are adequate for the assessment purposes and methods, and they are used to help ensure high quality practices. Research is conducted to ensure that assessments are supporting and not harming important student learning. Because the context of learning affects student achievement and all students are held to the same high standards, accountability reports include contextual information about resources, school practices and quality, and other outcomes.

Principle 2: Indicators

1. Teachers, schools, districts, or states make reports on and decisions about individuals on the basis of cumulative evidence of learning, using a variety of assessment information, not on the basis of any single assessment.
2. Assessment systems provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning.
3. Schools use assessment information to improve curriculum, instruction, and teacher effectiveness.
4. The evaluation of an accumulation of work and assessments done by students over time is a major component of accountability.
5. Information for accountability is obtained through sampling, to the extent feasible.
6. When classroom-based information is used in accountability, independent evaluations of the information, such as re-scoring a sample of the portfolios or exams, are conducted.
7. Teachers view assessments for accountability purposes as consistent with and not harmful to curriculum, instruction, and high quality classroom assessment.
8. Information from large-scale assessments is returned to the school and teachers in a form that they can use.
9. If programs, schools, districts, or states are compared, appropriate contextual information is provided.
10. Technical standards for assessment systems are developed and used to ensure that assessments provide accurate and comprehensive information, measure progress toward learning goals in ways that are consistent with how students learn, and are used appropriately.
11. Technical studies of large-scale assessments or those used across a number of classrooms or schools show that the assessments focus on important knowledge as defined in learning goals, are consistent with knowledge of how students learn, and are not biased against particular population groups.
12. Validity studies of large-scale assessments or those used across a number of classrooms or schools show that the assessments have beneficial, not harmful, effects on student learning and that actions taken based on assessment information are adequately supported by and are appropriate uses of that information.

PRINCIPLE 3 Assessment Systems Are Fair to All Students

Assessment systems, including policies, practices, instruments, and uses, are fair to all students.

Assessment systems ensure that all students receive fair treatment in order not to limit students' present education and future opportunities. Assessment is fair when every student has received equitable and adequate schooling, including culturally sensitive curriculum, instruction, and assessment that encourage and support each student's learning, and when assessment systems meet these *Principles*. In particular:

Assessment results accurately reflect a student's actual knowledge, understanding and achievement. Assessments are designed to minimize the impact of biases on the student's performance, including:

- biases of persons developing or conducting the assessment, evaluating the performance, or interpreting or using the results;
- biases caused by basing assessments on the perspectives or experiences of one particular group; and
- biased format or content, including offensive language or stereotypes.

Educators and assessment and content experts construct assessment systems that support learning by all students in a diverse population with varying learning styles. Assessment developers and users recognize and build upon the benefits of diversity. Assessment systems allow for multiple methods, as stated in Principle 1, to assess student progress toward meeting learning goals and for multiple but equivalent ways for students to express knowledge and understanding. Assessments are administered under conditions that support high quality performance.

Assessments are created or adapted and accommodations are made to meet the specific needs of particular populations, while preserving the integrity and validity of the assessments. These populations include English language learners (also identified as limited English proficient students) and students with disabilities. Adaptations include, but are not limited to, physical accommodations, assessments in a student's primary language or language of instruction (written, oral or signed), and extra time. Advocates for specific groups help detail how to meet these assessment standards.

Students should not suffer adverse consequences simply because their backgrounds or school experiences may have made them less familiar with particular methods of assessment. Therefore, teachers and schools provide all students with instruction and practice in the assessment methods used to evaluate their progress, but do not engage in inappropriate coaching.

Assessment developers consider possible adverse consequences of using the assessment, particularly for those groups which currently suffer discrimination or the effects of previous discrimination. Assessments are modified as necessary to reduce harmful impacts while preserving accuracy. Assessments are used to provide students with optimal learning opportunities, rather than place them in tracks or programs which narrow curriculum options or foreclose educational opportunities.

Principle 3: Indicators

1. Every student has the opportunity to perform on a variety of high quality assessments during the school year.
2. Schools prepare all students to perform well on assessments which meet these principles.
3. Assessment practices recognize and incorporate the variety of cultural backgrounds of students who are assessed.
4. Assessment practices incorporate the variety of different student learning styles.
5. Assessments, particularly for young children, are developmentally appropriate.
6. Assessments are created or adapted to meet the needs of students who are learning English.
7. Assessments are created or adapted and accommodations made to meet the needs of students who have a disability.
8. All students are knowledgeable and experienced in the assessment methods used to evaluate their work.
9. The group which designs or validates an assessment reflects, has experience with, and understands the particular needs and backgrounds of the student population, including race, culture, gender, socio-economic, language, age, and disability status.
10. Committees of persons knowledgeable about the diverse student population review large-scale assessments for bias and are able to modify, remove, or replace items, tasks, rubrics, or other elements of the assessment, if they find them biased or offensive.
11. Teacher education and continuing professional development prepare teachers to assess all students fairly.
12. Technical standards are developed and used to ensure that assessments do not have harmful consequences for student learning or teaching.
13. States and districts report their assessment data by racial, ethnic, gender, linguistic, disability, and socio-economic status groups for analysis of school, district, and state results, provided that doing so does not infringe upon student privacy rights.
14. Schools do not use assessments to track or place students in ways that narrow curriculum options or foreclose educational opportunities.

PRINCIPLE 4 Professional Collaboration and Development Support Assessment

Knowledgeable and fair educators are essential to high quality assessment systems and practices.

Assessment systems depend on educators who understand the full range of assessment purposes, use appropriately a variety of suitable methods, work collaboratively, and engage in ongoing professional development to improve their capability as assessors.

Teachers are the primary assessors. They:

- document, evaluate, and report student learning;
- construct, select, and use appropriate, high-quality methods and instruments to meet various assessment purposes; and
- participate in developing and scoring any district or state assessments and know how to use relevant information from them.

Schools of education assess their own students using methods they expect prospective teachers to learn to use. They prepare administrators to support, assist, and supervise teachers in high quality assessment practices. They prepare teachers to:

- integrate assessment with instruction and curriculum;
- use a variety of high quality methods for assessing the performance and development of a diverse student population; and
- communicate with families and students about the methods used and the information obtained from the assessments.

Educators, including teachers, administrators, teacher aides, school psychologists, and counselors, determine the types of individual and collective professional development that contribute to the quality of assessment practices. They actively participate in such professional development. They work together to improve their craft, meet regularly to discuss assessment and evaluate student work, and establish networks to discuss assessment issues and practices, particularly in the fields they teach. They engage in scoring and discussing portfolios, work samples, or performance examinations at the district or state level. They consult with families, the community, and various experts to shape professional development in assessment to meet the needs of all their students. Schools, states, and districts provide resources that educators can call on or use as appropriate to strengthen their assessment capabilities.

Principle 4: Indicators

1. Teacher educators ensure that beginning teachers possess basic knowledge, skills, and experience for assessing their students with a variety of appropriate methods and communicating with parents and students.
2. Teacher educators practice appropriate assessment techniques.
3. Teachers perform well in their role as primary assessors of student learning.
4. Teachers regularly participate in setting performance standards, selecting examples of work of different quality, and scoring or re-scoring portfolios or performance assessments at the school, district, or state level.
5. Teachers and administrators know how to use the results of large-scale assessment information for program and school improvement.
6. Schools and districts provide regular, substantial meeting time for collaborative professional development that includes discussions of assessment, actual student work, and the relationship of assessment to instruction.
7. Educators work together to determine the professional development needed for improving their capabilities as assessors.
8. Educators actively participate in professional development for improving their capabilities as assessors.
9. Teachers and other school personnel consult with parents and other community members about professional development related to assessing all students in the school.
10. Schools, districts, and states provide adequate opportunities for administrators to engage in professional development that supports sound teacher and school assessment practices.
11. Schools and districts enable teacher aides, counselors, psychologists and other school personnel to participate with teachers, as appropriate, in professional development about assessment.
12. Districts and states provide resources needed for professional development.

PRINCIPLE 5 The Broad Community Participates in Assessment Development

Assessment systems draw on the community's knowledge and ensure support by including parents, community members, and students, together with educators and professionals with particular expertise, in the development of the system.

Parents, family members, and students contribute important information and knowledge to both classroom and large-scale assessments. This includes knowledge about how students learn, the communities and cultures in which they live, and how children can be prepared for assessment experiences. School systems educate family and community members to participate effectively in the assessment system and provide information about how parents can support their children in the assessment process. School systems also educate parents and the community about the meaning of assessment results. Schools, districts and other assessment developers create a supportive atmosphere, ensure accessible meeting times and places, and use language that encourages broad-based community participation in planning, designing, and evaluating the assessments.

In constructing, selecting, and using assessments for their classrooms, teachers incorporate and build on parent, family, community, and expert knowledge. Developers of large-scale assessments include teachers and other school-based educators in the development process.

Assessment, curriculum, and content experts continue to have a central role in developing large-scale assessments. They also have a responsibility to help teachers and schools develop and improve classroom assessment practices. Experts are particularly attuned to teachers' needs to improve assessments within the everyday constraints and challenges of teaching. Teachers and administrators, in turn, consider the insights provided and issues raised by the experts.

Other evaluators of students, such as counselors and psychologists, work with teachers, relying primarily on analysis of classroom activity to plan how best to educate each child.

Principle 5: Indicators

1. Teachers, schools, districts, states, and other assessment developers include students, family, and community members in planning, developing, reviewing, and evaluating assessment systems, instruments, and practices.
2. Schools and districts educate parents and community members to participate effectively in developing and reviewing assessment systems and practices.
3. Teachers, schools and districts educate parents and community members about the meaning and interpretation of assessment results.
4. Those developing assessments ensure that meeting times and places are accessible to all people who desire to participate in assessment development.
5. Schools and teachers provide parents the opportunity to discuss classroom assessment practices.
6. Students participate in discussing standards and planning both classroom and large-scale assessments.
7. Teachers, school administrators, and other school personnel from a variety of subject areas, grade levels, and demographic backgrounds play a prominent role in designing, administering, and scoring any assessments mandated by the school, district, state, or federal government.
8. Assessment, curriculum, and content experts work together with school-based educators to develop assessments that support important learning, are compatible with how students learn, and promote effective instruction.

PRINCIPLE 6 Communication about Assessment Is Regular and Clear

Educators, schools, districts, and states clearly and regularly discuss assessment system practices and student and program progress with students, families, and the community.

Educators, schools, districts, and states communicate, clearly and in ordinary language, the purposes, methods, and results of assessment. They focus their reporting on what students know and are able to do, what they need to learn to do, and what will be done to facilitate improvement in learning. They report achievement data in terms of learning standards and avoid comparing students or programs in ways that do not support good instructional practices. Teachers and schools also clearly inform parents and students about important assessments, including what the assessment is, when it will occur, and how the results will be used.

Schools, districts, and states make use of many avenues of communication (with appropriate protection for student privacy), including parent-teacher conferences, mass media, school papers, displays of student work in public spaces, and open meetings to view and discuss student work and assessment results. They also provide translations (written, oral, or signed) of important information into languages used by the families and communities served. Information on all students in the system is included in public reports by schools, districts, and states.

Teachers, schools, districts, and states establish avenues for comment and feedback from family and community members about the assessment processes. Educators and technical experts work with families and communities to improve reporting and plan how best to receive and use feedback to improve assessment practices. Specialized or technical information intended primarily for professional use is also readily available to the public.

Schools, districts, and states present assessment results in conjunction with other information about schooling, including information about:

- education programs, including curriculum, instructional practices, student placement practices, and class size;
- social data, including poverty indices and demographic data on students, staff, and community;
- resources, including funding and expenditures, staff qualifications, and available materials and equipment;
- school environment, including building quality and freedom from violence; and
- outcomes, including graduation rates, post-secondary education attendance, and other measures of long-term achievement and satisfaction.

Principle 6: Indicators

1. Survey results show that parents and other community members from different racial, ethnic, cultural, income, disability, and linguistic groups agree that reports:
   - are clear;
   - are sufficiently frequent; and
   - include sufficient examples of goals, standards, sample or actual assessments, rubrics or scoring guides, and examples of student products (with safeguards for privacy).
2. Parents, students, and other community members participate in determining the content, form, and frequency that reporting will take.
3. Translations enable all parents with limited or no English proficiency to receive information about the achievement of their children; and they enable all community members to receive data about student achievement in general at the school, district, and state levels.
4. Reports on schools, districts, or states include information on all students.
5. Schools, districts, and states report achievement information to the public in terms of agreed-upon learning standards.
6. Schools and teachers report individual student achievement information to students and families in terms of learning standards, individual growth and progress, student interests, and how the student learns.
7. School and teacher reports about student achievement focus on what students know and are able to do, what they need to learn to do, and what will be done to facilitate improvement.
8. Teachers and schools present information in a variety of ways, including written reports and conferences, to students and their families.
9. Teachers clearly inform students and parents about important assessments, including what, when, and how they are used.
10. Schools, districts, and states use many avenues of communication to inform the public.
11. All reports explain the meanings, limitations, and strengths of reported data.
12. Public reports present assessment information in the context of education programs, social data, resources, school environment, and other outcomes.
13. Technical and specialized reports are readily available to interested members of the public.

PRINCIPLE 7 Assessment Systems Are Regularly Reviewed and Improved

Assessment systems are regularly reviewed and improved to ensure that the systems are educationally beneficial to all students.

Assessment systems must evolve and improve. Even well-designed systems must adapt to changing conditions and increased knowledge. A periodic, comprehensive review is the basis for making decisions to alter all or part of the assessment system. In this review process, educators use these *Principles and Indicators*, including the "Foundations" section. An assessment review usually is integrated with a review of the educational system as a whole.

The ultimate value of an assessment system is its ability to enhance learning for all students. Reviews involve an inquiry process focused on two questions: Does the system provide information useful for making decisions and taking action? Are the actions taken educationally beneficial?

Reviewers consider how well the information provided by assessments helps in making decisions and improving schooling. They pay careful attention to any unintended consequences of the assessment system, particularly on teaching and learning, and especially for groups who suffer discrimination or the effects of previous discrimination. Reviewers consider how well the system adheres to each of the assessment principles. They also consider how well the parts of the assessment system combine to form a coherent whole. If only part of a total system is reviewed (e.g., one school's assessments), the review is tailored to fit the purposes of that part.

To ensure that timely and effective reviews are conducted, a continuing group has responsibility for monitoring the review process. The primary reviewers of classroom assessments are school-based educators working collaboratively. Parents, students, and other educators and experts also provide feedback about classroom and school practices. Assessment reviews by schools are part of regular evaluations of school quality. Reviews of large-scale assessments and whole systems require broad participation from all stakeholder groups, including teachers and other educators; family and community members; advocacy, civil rights, higher education, business, labor and community groups; students; and assessment and curriculum specialists. Independent expert analysis of the system is included in the public review process.

Reviews include an analysis of the costs and benefits of the assessments to the education system as a whole. The most important criterion for cost-benefit analysis is that the assessment benefit and not harm important student learning.

Schools, districts, and states use review information to improve the system. Because new programs or fundamental changes take time to show results, school systems do not use assessment review information to make hasty decisions about programs; nor do they use difficulties in implementing new assessments that are consistent with these *Principles* as a reason to quickly discard them.

Principle 7: Indicators

1. The assessment system at all levels is reviewed regularly.
2. A continuing group has responsibility for monitoring the assessment review process.
3. Surveys show that stakeholders were able to participate in evaluating school, district, and state assessment systems.
4. Public review of the assessment system includes analysis by independent experts in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
5. Cost-benefit analyses of the assessment system focus on its effects on instruction and learning.
6. The review includes evidence of the use of assessment information in the educational planning and improvement process.
7. Reviewers evaluate:
   - adequacy of classroom assessment practices to support important learning for all students;
   - effects of assessments on curriculum, instruction, and learning;
   - adequacy of information for certification, program improvement, and accountability;
   - fairness for all students;
   - technical quality and rigor of assessments;
   - intended and unintended consequences of the assessment system, particularly those affecting learning and equity;
   - adequacy of professional development activities;
   - extent and quality of professional collaboration on assessment;
   - extent and quality of stakeholder involvement in developing and reviewing the assessment system;
   - adequacy of contextual information that is presented with assessment data and used to help understand student learning outcomes;
   - quality of communication with families and the public;
   - costs and benefits of the assessment system;
   - quality and usefulness of the review process itself; and
   - coherence of the assessment system.

GLOSSARY

Accountability: Responsibility for general school processes and student achievement, including confirming that resources were effectively used and using assessment results to provide information about what children have learned to the public.

Assessment: Using various methods to obtain information about student learning that can be used to guide a variety of decisions and actions. Methods include observations, interviews, video and audio tapes, projects, experiments, tests, performances, and portfolios.

Bias: A lack of objectivity, fairness, or impartiality on the part of the assessor or evaluator, the assessment instrument or procedures, or in the interpretation and evaluation process, that leads to misinterpretation of student performance or knowledge.

Content standards: The desired learning (knowledge, skills, understandings, and habits of mind) that students should acquire and be able to demonstrate.

Developmentally appropriate: Practices based on what is known about how children and youth develop, learn, and manifest their learning.

English language learners: Individuals whose primary language is not English and who are in the process of learning English. Sometimes called limited English proficient students.

Evaluation: The process of interpretation and use of information to make decisions; also, judgment regarding the quality, value, or worth of a response, product, or performance based upon established criteria.

Exhibition: An extended, multi-part project resulting in tangible products and/or presentations; a term often used to describe major performances or activities in a student's school career or a culmination of work in a class.

Habits of mind: A summary term for various dispositions important for effective thinking and learning, including such things as: reading with curiosity; reflecting critically on one's own work; developing independence, clarity, and incisiveness of thought; willingness to work hard; and an ability to manage time effectively.

Important learning: Central concepts, essential skills, and critical ways of thinking within or across a subject/discipline.

Learning styles: Characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how individual learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment.

Observation: Watching and recording what students do, without immediate judgment or interpretation.

Opportunity to learn: Giving students the means to acquire high level knowledge and skills; also, provision of equitable and adequate learning resources, including capable teachers, rich curriculum, high-quality facilities, equipment and materials, and essential support services.

Performance: A presentation of one's work before an audience, which may include classmates, parents, or members of the community, in addition to scorers.

Performance assessment: General term for an assessment activity in which students construct responses, create products, or perform demonstrations to provide evidence of their knowledge and skills.

Performance standard: An established level of achievement, quality of performance, or degree of proficiency. Performance standards specify what a student is expected to achieve or perform to show the student has substantially met content standards.

Portfolio: A purposeful or systematic collection of selected student work and student self-assessments developed over time, gathered to demonstrate and evaluate progress and achievement in learning.

Portfolio assessment: The process of developing, reviewing, and evaluating student portfolios.

Project: An extended work, such as a research report in history or a science investigation.

Professional development: Continued learning by educators to improve their knowledge and skills.

Reliability: The degree to which an assessment measures consistently or to which assessment scores are free from errors of measurement.

Sampling: A way to collect information about a group by examining only a part of the group (the sample), or by dividing a test into sections and giving each member of the group or the sample only one part of the test (matrix sampling).

Scoring guide ("rubric"): A guide based on specified standards used to score performance assessments. Rubrics contain a scale (e.g., 6,5,4,3,2,1 or "distinguished, proficient, apprentice, novice") and descriptions of the features/characteristics of work at each point on the scale.

Stakeholder(s): Those individuals who have a substantial interest in schools and student learning, who may include students, teachers, administrators, other school staff, parents, advocacy organizations, community members, higher education institutions, and employers.

Tracking: The process of sorting students of the same age or grade level into categories and assigning them to various kinds of classes with different levels of instruction, for most or all of the school day, and for the long term or permanently.

Validity: The extent to which an assessment measures what it is supposed to measure. More precisely, the degree to which evidence and judgment supports or disproves the adequacy and appropriateness of inferences and actions based on specific assessment information. Validity indicates the degree of accuracy of predictions or inferences based upon an assessment score.

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RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations provide assistance with or materials about performance assessment. In addition, various teacher, principal, administrator, school board, state superintendent, and subject area professional associations provide information on performance assessment or assistance in implementing performance assessments.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
1250 North Pitt Street
Arlington, VA 22314-1403
(703) 549-9110

Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing (CRESST)
University of California at Los Angeles
10880 Wilshire Boulevard, Rm. 734
Los Angeles, CA 90024-1522
(310) 206-1532

Center on Learning, Assessment, and School Structure (CLASS)
648 The Great Road
Princeton, NJ 08540
(609) 252-1211

Coalition of Essential Schools
Box 1969
Brown University
Providence, RI 02912
(401) 863-3384

National Center for Education Outcomes for Students with Disabilities
350 Elliott Hall
University of Minnesota
75 East River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 626-1530

National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest)
342 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 864-4810

New Standards Project
c/o National Center on Education and the Economy
700 11th Street NW, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 783-3668

Performance Assessment Collaboratives for Education (PACE)
Harvard Graduate School of Education
8 Story Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 496-2770

Project Zero
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Longfellow Hall
Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 495-4342

The Prospect Center
P. O. Box 326
North Bennington, VT 05257-0326
(802) 442-8333

How the *Principles and Indicators* Were Developed

In 1991, the National Forum on Assessment released *Criteria for the Evaluation of Student Assessment Systems*, a two-page statement endorsed by dozens of education and civil rights organizations, designed to help guide the improvement of student assessment systems. This statement was the starting point for development of the *Principles*.

The *Principles* were produced through a multi-step process, beginning in November 1993, in which many drafts were written, discussed, and revised. The Forum itself met monthly to discuss the development of the document.

To obtain input from organizations and individuals outside the Forum, meetings were held in a number of cities. Some involved a range of people (teachers, administrators, community members, researchers, and policymakers) while others included members of a particular organization. These meetings were held in:

Cambridge, MA (co-hosted by Project Zero), December 20, 1993
Washington, DC (civil rights groups), January 6, 1994
Ft. Myers, FL (meeting of EIAC Assessment Task Force of CCSSO), January 20, 1994
Washington, DC (teachers with the NEA), January 24, 1994
Los Angeles (co-hosted by CRESST), March 15, 1994
San Francisco (co-hosted by the Far West Laboratory), March 16, 1994
Arlington, VA (administrators with the AASA), March 31, 1994
Chicago (co-hosted by Designs for Change), May 13, 1994
Chicago (meeting of ASCD Assessment Consortium), May 14, 1994
Milwaukee (co-hosted by the Milwaukee Public Schools), May 16, 1994
Madison (co-hosted by Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools), May 17, 1994
Cleveland (co-hosted by the Cleveland Foundation), May 18, 1994
Alexandria, VA (principals with the NAESP), June 2, 1994
New York (co-hosted by NCREST), June 7, 1994
Albuquerque (CCSSO Large-Scale Assessment Conference), June 14, 1994
Cambridge (co-hosted by Lesley College), June 20, 1994
Phoenix (CCSSO Large-Scale Assessment Conference), June 20-22, 1995

In addition, hundreds of individuals and organizations received the *Principles* by mail, with many responding to drafts and offering feedback. Input from the meetings and the written comments were incorporated by the Forum into subsequent drafts and the final product.

Co-chairs of the National Forum on Assessment are Monty Neill, the National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest), and Ruth Mitchell, The Education Trust, American Association for Higher Education. They wish to thank the many reviewers, the organizations which hosted meetings, and the many Forum members who volunteered substantial time to work on the *Principles*.

FairTest provided staffing for the project. Funding was provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Joyce Foundation, with additional support from the Ford Foundation.

SUMMARY *Principles and Indicators for Student Assessment Systems*

Assessment of student learning is undergoing profound change at the same time reforms are taking place in learning goals and content standards, curriculum, instruction, the education of teachers, and the relationships among parents, communities, schools, government, and business. These *Principles* provide a vision of how to transform assessment systems and practices as part of wider school reform, with a particular focus on improving classroom assessment while ensuring large-scale assessment also supports learning. To best serve learning, assessment must be integrated with curriculum and instruction.

High quality assessment must rest on strong *educational foundations*. These foundations include organizing schools to meet the learning needs of all their students, understanding how students learn, establishing high standards for student learning, and providing equitable and adequate opportunity to learn.

The *Principles* reflect an "ideal"—what the National Forum on Assessment believes is the best that assessment can be and do. We understand that they will not be implemented immediately or with great ease. We do firmly hold, however, that education systems must move toward meeting these principles if assessment is to play a positive role in improving education for all students.

Principle 1: The Primary Purpose of Assessment Is to Improve Student Learning

Assessment systems, including classroom and large-scale assessment, are organized around the primary purpose of improving student learning. Assessment systems provide useful information about whether students have reached important learning goals and about the progress of each student. They employ practices and methods that are consistent with learning goals, curriculum, instruction, and current knowledge of how students learn. Classroom assessment that is integrated with curriculum and instruction is the primary means of assessment. Educators assess student learning through such methods as structured and informal observations and interviews, projects and tasks, tests, performances and exhibitions, audio and videotapes, experiments, portfolios, and journals. Multiple-choice methods and assessments intended to rank order or compare students, if used, are a limited part of the assessment system. The educational consequences of assessment are evaluated to ensure that the effects are beneficial.

Principle 2: Assessment for Other Purposes Supports Student Learning

Assessment systems report on and certify student learning and provide information for school improvement and accountability by using practices that support important learning. Teachers, schools and education systems make important decisions, such as high school graduation, on the basis of information gathered over time, not a single assessment. Information for accountability and improvement comes from regular, continuing work and assessment of students in schools and from large-scale assessments. Accountability assessments use sampling procedures. Rigorous technical standards for assessment are developed and used to ensure high quality assessments and to monitor the actual educational consequences of assessment use.

Principle 3: Assessment Systems Are Fair to All Students

Assessment systems, including instruments, policies, practices and uses, are fair to all students. Assessment systems ensure that all students receive fair treatment in order not to limit students' present and future opportunities. They allow for multiple methods to assess student progress and for multiple but equivalent ways for students to express knowledge and understanding. Assessments are unbiased and reflect a student's actual knowledge. They are created or appropriately adapted and accommodations are made to meet the specific needs of particular populations, such as English language learners and students with disabilities. Educators provide students with instruction in the assessment methods that are used. Bias review committees study and approve each large-scale assessment.

Principle 4: Professional Collaboration and Development Support Assessment

Knowledgeable and fair educators are essential for high quality assessment. Assessment systems depend on teachers and other educators who understand the full range of assessment purposes, use appropriately a variety of suitable methods, work collaboratively, and engage in ongoing professional development to improve their capability as assessors. Schools of education prepare teachers and other educators well for assessing a diverse student population. Educators determine and participate in professional development and work together to improve their craft. Their competence is strengthened by groups of teachers scoring student work at the district or state levels. Schools, districts, and states provide needed resources for professional development.

Principle 5: The Broad Community Participates in Assessment Development

Assessment systems draw on the community's knowledge and ensure support by including parents, community members, and students, together with educators and professionals with particular expertise, in the development of the system. Discussion of assessment purposes and methods involves a wide range of people interested in education. Parents, students, and members of the public join a variety of experts, teachers, and other educators in shaping the assessment system.

Principle 6: Communication about Assessment Is Regular and Clear

Educators, schools, districts, and states clearly and regularly discuss assessment system practices and student and program progress with students, families, and the community. Educators and institutions communicate, in ordinary language, the purposes, methods, and results of assessment. They focus reporting on what students know and are able to do, what they need to learn to do, and what will be done to facilitate improvement. They report achievement data in terms of agreed-upon learning goals. Translations are provided as needed. Examples of assessments and student work are made available to parents and the community so they know what high quality performance and local students' work looks like. Assessment results are reported together with contextual information such as education programs, social data, resource availability, and other student outcomes.

Principle 7: Assessment Systems Are Regularly Reviewed and Improved

Assessment systems are regularly reviewed and improved to ensure that the systems are educationally beneficial to all students. Assessment systems must evolve and improve. Even well-designed systems must adapt to changing conditions and increased knowledge. Reviews are the basis for making decisions to alter all or part of the assessment system. Reviewers include stakeholders in the education system and independent expert analysts. A cost-benefit analysis of the system focuses on the effects of assessment on learning. These *Principles*, including "Foundations," provide the basis for evaluating the system.

SIGNERS

We, the undersigned, recommend that educators, schools, districts, states, and parent, advocacy, civil rights, community, business, and other organizations concerned with education give serious consideration to the Principles and Indicators for Student Assessment Systems *for use in evaluating, revising, and developing assessments and assessment systems.*

Organizations

The Achievement Council, Los Angeles, CA
Alameda County Office of Education, CA
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), Washington, DC
Association for Community Based Education (ACBE), Washington, DC
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Alexandria, VA
Association for Women in Science, Washington, DC
Boston Leadership Academy, Boston University
California Teachers Association
California Tomorrow
Center for Collaborative Education, New York, NY
Center for Collaborative Education, Metro Boston, Inc., Massachusetts
Center for Language in Learning, El Cajon, CA
Center for Women Policy Studies, Washington, DC
Center on Learning, Assessment, and School Structure (CLASS), Princeton, NJ
Chicago Teachers Union Quest Center, Chicago, IL
Cleveland Education Fund, Ohio
Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Public School System, Saipan, MP
Community Involved Charter School, Lakewood, CO
Community School District 3, New York, NY
Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC), Boston, MA
The Council for Exceptional Children, Reston, VA
Council of the Great City Schools, Washington, DC
Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, Chicago, IL
Current Index to Research of Music in Education (CIRME), Boston, MA
Education Law Center - PA, Philadelphia
The Equality in Testing Project, Holmdel, NJ
Erikson Institute, Chicago, IL
Evaluation Assistance Center East at the George Washington University Institute for Equity and Excellence in Education
Fairfax Association of Elementary School Principals (FAESP), Virginia
Fairfield Area School District, Pennsylvania
Fenway Middle College High School, Boston, MA
Foundation For Youth Impact, Inc., Atlanta, GA
The Foundations School, Chicago, IL
Gallaudet University, Washington, DC
High/Scope Education Research Foundation, Ypsilanti, MI
Hispanic Education Coalition, Washington, DC
Institute for Democracy in Education, Ohio University
Institute for Education and Social Policy, New York University
The Institute for Learning & Teaching, St. Paul, MN
Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), San Antonio, TX
International Reading Association (IRA), Newark, DE
The Learning Center at Wildcat Canyon Ranch/City Stables, Oakland, CA
Ludlow Independent Schools, Ludlow, KY
Manoa Writing Program, University of Hawai'i
Manpower International Inc., Milwaukee, WI
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), Los Angeles, CA
Midwest Desegregation Assistance Center, Kansas State University
Milwaukee District Advisory Council, Wisconsin
Mississippi Human Services Agenda
National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE), Washington, DC
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Washington, DC
National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), Alexandria, VA
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), Reston, VA
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), Alexandria, VA

National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest), Cambridge, MA
National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST), New York, NY
National Center on Educational Outcomes for Students with Disabilities, Minneapolis, MN
National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, George Washington University
National Coalition for Indian Education, Albuquerque, NM
National Coalition of Education Activists, Rhinebeck, NY
National Council for the Social Studies, Washington, DC
National Education Association (NEA), Washington, DC
National Parent Teacher Association (National PTA), Chicago, IL
National Urban Coalition, Washington, DC
National Urban League, New York, NY
National Women's Law Center, Washington, DC
Network of Educators on the Americas (NECA), Washington, DC
New England Desegregation Assistance Center at Brown University, Rhode Island
North Philadelphia Community Compact for College Access and Success, Pennsylvania
Northern Trails Area Education Agency, Iowa
Panasonic Foundation, Secaucus, NJ
Parents Only Want Equal Rights in Education (POWER-E), Detroit, MI
Partnership for Professional Development, University of Louisville
Pennsylvania School Reform Network
Philadelphia Education Fund, Pennsylvania
Portfolio News / Portfolio Assessment Clearinghouse, University of California at San Diego
Program Evaluation and Research Group, Lesley College
Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education
Public Education Fund Network, Washington, DC
Public School 261, Brooklyn, NY
Rochester Teachers Association's (RTA) Leadership for Reform Institute, New York
Science Weekly, Inc., Silver Spring, MD
Social Equity Technical Assistance Center, San Diego State University
Synergy Learning, Brattleboro, VT
Teachers' Laboratory, Brattleboro, VT
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Bob Witherspoon, Research Associate

Jim Ysseldyke, Director, National Center on Educational Outcomes for Students with Disabilities, Minnesota

Esteban Steve Zapiain, Specialist, Alameda County Office of Education, California

SIGN-ON FORM

PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS FOR STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

We, the undersigned, recommend that educators, schools, districts, states, and parent, advocacy, civil rights, community, business, and other organizations concerned with education give serious consideration to the Principles and Indicators for Student Assessment Systems *for use in evaluating, revising, and developing assessments and assessment systems.*

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ e-mail: _____

❑ You may add our organization to the list of signers of the above statement. I understand our name will be used in public releases of the *Principles and Indicators*.

❑ You may add my individual name to the list of signers.

- ❑ You may use my organization's name, for identification purposes only, in public releases of the *Principles*.
- ❑ As an individual signer, you may not add my organization's name, even for identification purposes. I would like to be identified as _____

Date_____ Signature _____

Mail or Fax to:

National Forum on Assessment
c/o FairTest
342 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139
Fax # (617) 497-2224

Note: The list of signers will be updated periodically.